A MODEST PLEA FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By *Richard Hollingworth*, A. M. and Vicar of *Weſt-Ham* near *London*.

Confuſion in Religion will as certainly follow every mans turning Prieſt or Preacher, as it will in the State where every one affects to rule as King. King *Charles* the Firſt his Life and Meditations, *Octavo.* page 275.

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TO

The Right Reverend Father in God

HENRY

Lord Biſhop of

LONDON.

My Lord,

IT is obſerved that the Enemies of our Church notwithſtanding in the memory of many now alive they acted ſuch things as were impious and diabolical, and but ſome few years ago were beholden to an act of Pardon to ſecure to them

their Lives and Eſtates, yet are ſo fond of themſelves and their Opinions ſtill, that they lift up their heads with their former confidence, and print and preach themſelves the only People of God in oppoſition to that great Body of men who do orderly comply with the Kingdoms Laws; And withal are at this time uſing all artifices whatſoever to pull us up both root and branch once again. (So very thankful are they for all his Majeſties gracious condeſcenſions to them.)

But ſeeing they are ſo reſolved, and nothing can oblige them, I think every true Son of the Church ought to uſe the Talent God hath given him, to obviate their

their deſigns, and to diſcover thoſe wily methods by which they purſue the Churches ruine; which I am ſure is a more juſtifiable undertaking than theirs, let their pretences be never ſo ſpecious and taking amongſt the more raſh and inconſiderate part of Mankind.

And from this Principle of Love and Honour to the Churches peace and ſafety, does this little Book make bold to appear abroad; and particularly to fly into your Lordſhips Arms, as the moſt proper Sanctuary for protection and defence from all thoſe rude aſſaults which our Adverſaries are too well acquainted with the practice of; which if your Lordſhip will be pleaſed to condeſcend

to,

to, it ſhall everlaſtingly be acknowledged as one of the greateſt Honours, done to

Your Lordſhips Faithful
and Obedient Servant

Richard Hollingworth.

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Tho. Tomkyns.

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THE

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Am not ignorant by what ſlights and methods ſuch honeſt and well deſigned Books as this are anſwered; it is but telling the credulous vulgar that the man that writ it, is unacquainted with the power of Godlineſs, that the ſeed of Cain *will be envying the ſeed of* Seth, *and the Children of the bond-woman inſulting over thoſe of the free, and the work is done, and the book laid aſide, as not good enough for waſte paper. That I may therefore prevent this, give me leave to aver thus much in mine own behalf, that the Chriſtian Religion is a thing ſo admirably wiſe in its contrivance, ſo great an Inſtance of Divine Power in its production, and ſo amply demonſtrative of a never to be parallel'd*

love and goodneſs; it is ſo every way fitted to the needs and neceſſities, nay to the delight and entertainment of the minds of men, and accommodates it ſelf to them ſo fully in every condition: that ſhould a thought at any time crowd and thruſt it ſelf into my ſoul, that invites me to any neglect or contempt of it, I muſt either forſake my Principles, or elſe I muſt throw it out with all becoming wrath and indignation; And I pray God I may no longer make any abode in this houſe of clay, than I may one way or other be inſtrumental to recommend it to the choice and liking of all men, within my knowledge and acquaintance. And though I dare not confidently boaſt of my ſelf, yet ſo fully am I ſatisfyed of the truth and Divinity of its Author, of the excellency of its Doctrines and Principles, of the advantages that naturally (as well as thoſe by promiſe) flow from a ſevere and honeſt, from an impartial and univerſal practice of its Rules and Methods; that I think I could for its Honour, and its further obtaining in the World, part with all that is near and dear to me. And therefore

ſhould

ſhould I think, that any thing in this ſmall Treatiſe did tend in the leaſt to leſſen its eſteem, and to expoſe ſo excellent a Syſteme, to the ſcorn and laughter, or to the contempt and diſdain of any perſon, I would by my own hands revenge my ſelf upon it, for being guilty of ſo hainous a piece of wickedneſs, and out of a juſt reſentment of its unworthineſs to appear in the world, either ſacrifice it to the flames, or bury it among the filth and ordure of an unſavoury dunghill. No, ſo lovely a thing is this excellent Religion *in my eyes (and I aſſure you this lovelineſs does not appear to me from bare ſenſible impreſſions or warm touches upon my fancy, but from rational convictions of mind and underſtanding) that I cannot forbear admiring and honouring any perſon, upon whoſe ſoul I ſee any ſtroaks or lines of* Religion *drawn, and who by his carriage and behaviour evidences himſelf devoted to its Intereſt and Service. Yea though theſe perſons differ from me in Judgment, or any particular opinion, yet if the difference iſſues merely from the weakneſs of their minds or the neceſſary*

impoſitions of their firſt education, and there appears no mixture of the ſtubbornneſs and obſtinacy of a reſolved will, (which gives the formality to ſin) I do declare that I can cohabit with them as Brethren, treat them as Intimates and Familiars, and ſerve them with the affection of a real and unintereſted Friend. And thoſe men whom God hath received (and no otherways can I judge of ſuch, whom I find in a Zealous purſuit of eſſential holineſs and goodneſs, and more cool and careleſs in promoting remote opinions and needleſs theories and ſpeculations) I dare not judge, but hope to meet them at the laſt day, and with them to enter into a poſſeſſion of thoſe Glories, which Chriſt is gone to prepare for all his Faithful Followers.

And therefore if any perſon enquire, how it comes to paſs that I have expoſed a Book to publick view, wherein ſo many, whom it may be they greatly eſteem for holineſs and ſtrict walking, are ſo much concerned, and ſo ſeverely reprehended? I reply; 'Tis none of their holineſs I reprove, God forbid, but thoſe ungodly practices,

practices, and unſeaſonable diviſions, which many of them themſelves once eagerly complained and petitioned againſt, and which I am confident will in the end be bitter to them.

And further I do aver, that it is no particular man I exerciſe my zeal in the following diſcourſe againſt, but formed bodies, and united Factions of men, who in companies and numbers flock together, and publickly break thoſe Laws, the preſervation of the honour of which is ſo neceſſary to us in all our capacities and circumſtances whatſoever. And when the ſame Authority that hath bound and reined them in, ſhall think good by Laws to let them looſe, I have done, and ſhall ſubmit to the Will of my Superiours: but till then I think the ill influence that this general diſobedience hath upon the minds of the more ignorant ſort of perſons in other particulars, beſides that of rending the Church of England *in pieces, is enough to juſtifie and warrant my zeal and courage in ſuch an undertaking.*

And that I may vindicate my ſelf from future aſperſions, and ſatisfie the unprejudiced part of the World, that it was not bitterneſs of ſpirit, but a true regard for the honour and reputation of the Proteſtant Religion, that put me upon ſuch meditations, I will give you the particular Motives prompting me thereunto; which when done, I hope I ſhall find a candid acceptance, and favourable opinion in all worthy and generous, in all diſpaſſionate and diſintereſted breaſts.

Firſt then, I found the principles from which Nonconformity to the Church does flow, and by which they ſeek to countenance the preſent Separation, not only to be falſe in themſelves, but withal bad in their impreſſions and influences; and that after by them people are unſetled, and forced to a breach with the Church of England, *nothing can be propoſed to them, that proves a firm ground to ſet their feet upon: But many, I was going to ſay moſt of them, run from one opinion to another, and that with the very ſame Arguments and Reaſons upon the ſcore of which*

which they parted from us. And he that will not come to the publick Church becauſe the Preacher wears a Surplice, &c. *which he can find no expreſs command for from Scripture, why, within a ſhort ſpace he leaves the Aſſemblys of the* Presbyterians, *becauſe they own ſeveral things as to Church Government, which do no ways correſpond with the practice of the Apoſtles, whoſe Churches they ſay were not ſubordinate to, but independent upon one another. And when it may be he hath linked himſelf with thoſe of the* Congregational *way, as they are pleaſed to phraſe it, why the ſame argument aſſaults him afreſh, and drives him into the tents of* Munſter, *and the man turns* Anabaptiſt, *becauſe he finds no explicite command for the adminiſtring that Sacrament to infants in all the new Teſtament. And alack! let him but with this principle read his Bible often, and put ſuch interpretations upon the ſeveral texts thereof, as his weak judgment, and overheated Fancy ſuggeſts to him, and it is ten to one but his head turns round every Moon, and that the man*

diſturbs not only himſelf, but all the Neighbourhood with his conſtant diſſatisfactions. Eſpecially if he ſet out, as uſually all theſe men do, with that other hopeful Principle, that the Magiſtrate hath nothing to do in matters of Divine Worſhip, and that his power is terminated within the compaſs of civil things; Oh this makes them all Lords and Princes, and puts a fulneſs of power into their hands to ſhape and faſhion what Religion or model of Worſhip to themſelves they pleaſe. And by vertue of theſe too pernicious Principles we find ſome have run into all the abſurdities and blaſphemies of the Quakers; *and others have ſo tired themſelves with continual ſeeking, and importunate inquiries after the beſt way, that at laſt from a downright wearineſs, they have ſate down and in great diſcontent have thrown off all regard to Religion, and turned prophane ſcoffers at it, as a thing deſigned on purpoſe to puzzle mens brains and diſturb the World. And when I ſay this, I do not ſpeak without ſufficient evidence, there are too many proofs of it in*

this

this Kingdom, and he muſt be too little converſant either with men or Books that denies it.

And therefore upon this account I do heartily wiſh the Subjects of this Realm reduced to the principles of obedience to our excellent Church, becauſe I am perſwaded, that the time they conſume in needleſs enquiries, would be ſpent in fervent devotions, in dutiful attendance upon all thoſe Inſtruments and Methods of Inſtruction, whereby they might learn to govern their lives in thoſe ſeveral conditions they are in. And certainly had not theſe fooliſh principles been ſtarted, and thereby the minds of eaſy, and more illiterate perſons been amuſed, and peſtered with idle ſcruples, certainly, I ſay, Religion had met with a more univerſal acceptance, and chearful practice than now it does; and we might ſuppoſe among the Common people, what time they were at liberty from their neceſſary callings, would have been ſpent in heavenly meditations, in Zealous prayer, or in inſtructing their Children and Servants in the Fundamental Doctrines

of

of the Chriſtian Religion, or in reading ſuch good books as were deſigned, not to feed the Fancy, but to convince the Judgment, and proportionably to raiſe the Affections to God and Chriſt, to his holy Laws and excellent directions.

And though I know ſome men will except againſt all this I ſay, and offer in oppoſition to it, that many of the Members of their Separated Churches, have continued ſo from their firſt admiſſion, without ſtarting, and that therefore this is no argument againſt their principles, why, to this I anſwer, that mens continuance amongſt them, flows not from their Principles themſelves which certainly betray men to all imaginable fickleneſs and uncertainty, but from ſome other conſiderations, as either from an extreme love and eſteem for the Perſon, who is their ſuppoſed Paſtor, or elſe from prudential conſiderations of thoſe reproaches, that ſuch a flitting humour does expoſe them to, or ſome other things of a worſe nature, which though I could, yet I liſt not now to name.

And

And therefore I do entreat all thoſe into whoſe hands this ſmall Treatiſe ſhall come, to conſider well with themſelves the danger of admitting ſuch Principles into their belief; for I am confident, did moſt of thoſe well meaning People, who by vertue of theſe very Doctrines are drawn over to them, underſtand how deſtructive they are to all Churches whatſoever, how injurious to the Rights of Princes, robbing them of more than half their power, and what additions they make by them to God's Laws, impoſing ſuch things upon the belief and practice of others, (yea and under the notion of the unalterable Government of the Lord Chriſt,) as were not thought of for above fifteen hundred years together among the Churches of God in any part of the World; further, did they conſider how theſe Principles, (that will be content with nothing, but an abſolute determined way of Worſhip from Scripture,) take away all power of tolerating or bearing with any man of a contrary Mind, becauſe after a fulneſs of perſwaſion, that ſuch a thing is the only way of Chriſt, a man cannot think

think well of, nor conſequently ſuffer, if he have a power in his hands, any man to enjoy any opinion contrary thereunto, becauſe it is to give him leave to damn himſelf when it is in the others power very much to prevent it; I ſay, were theſe with many other conſiderations, well underſtood by the Common people, they would not, I am perſwaded, run in ſuch numbers from our Churches, nor be ſo eaſily beguiled into a belief of things, ſo every ways wanting a Foundation in Holy Writ, nor would they make ſuch vile and unworthy reflections upon a Church whoſe Foundation is laid, and ſuperſtructure built by the Laws of Reaſon and rightly underſtood Religion; in a word, which impoſes nothing upon our practice that is forbidden in Holy Scripture. And I hope there is ſo much weight in this one Reaſon I have given for my zeal againſt the preſent Separation, as may apologize for me and ſatisfy any modeſt man, that it is not from any Principle of deſpight to God, his Religion or his people that I have ventured upon ſuch a work as this: But I have yet more to ſay. Further

Further then, I took notice that Nonconformity had a very evil aſpect upon Governours, and Government; I found no men ſo ready to embrace any ſtories, whereby their ſuperiours were ſcornfully reflected upon, or vilely repreſented, as theſe men were, nor any men more haſty in ſpreading theſe tales further abroad: and wondring with my ſelf that men pretending to ſo extreme a ſtrictneſs, and pleading that ſtrictneſs as a ſign of their being the beſt of Saints, ſhould fail in ſo known and obvious a duty as obedience to Authority is, I looked back into Ages paſt, and God knows found the ſame temper and ſpirit among thoſe who were the auth rs and beginners of this deſolating Separation. I found one Goodman *an Exile in Queen* Maryes *days, and one of the* Anteſignani *of the Nonconformiſts, vindicating* Wyat's *rebellion, aſſerting in Print that his cauſe was God's, and that none but Traytors could accuſe him of Treaſon; and after this I find Queen* Elizabeth *maligned by* White, Rowland *and* Hawkins, *three of the Brotherhood,*

and

and by no means muſt ſhe be thought any otherways than an evil Princeſs, ſpoiling God's people, and extolling vanity, and this averred before Grindall *then Biſhop of* London. *And if I ſhould quote what hath dropt from theſe mens pens ſince, to the ſlandering of God's Anointed, this Preface would ſwell into too great a bulk.*

Now I muſt confeſs this thing very much troubled me, and ſtirred my paſſions, to ſee that in which our happineſs is ſo apparently wrapt up, and by vertue of which we ſafely poſſeſs the fruits of our own labours, made the ſcorn of boys and raw ſervants, and the wiſe and prudently enacted Laws, brought to the Barr many times, by a company of ſilly women, who are led captive, and laden with many luſts, and according to their deep and profound judgment voted obligatory, or elſe nulled and voided. And in good earneſt this appears to me the ready way to the Nations ruine as it naturally prepares men to ſerve their turn upon the eſtabliſhed Government, when ever opportunity is

put

put into their hands. And no man need bluſh in aſſerting this, when he conſiders, who they were, that in the beginning of the late unnatural War, readily took the Alarm, and clothed themſelves with courage and armour too, in order to fight the Lord's *battel againſt the Mighty, but ſuch perſons as had been brought up under, and diſciplin'd by ſuch Teachers as were known notoriouſly inclinable to the Principles of Separation.*

And he that conſiders with what pleaſure ſome men do reflect upon the Priviledges and enjoyments the late War gave them, before his Majeſties return, and how ready they are to ſuggeſt to young and unimpreſſed minds, that thoſe were days, wherein men might be as good as they would, and wherein ſcandalous Miniſters were turned out, with many other things of the like nature, he muſt needs infer from thence that many of theſe people are ſo far from repenting of what was then done, that they could willingly wade through the ſame paths of bloud, to be reinſtated in their former priviledges again.

Now

Now truly I muſt needs ſay that I cannot think the Kingdom ſafe ſo long as ſuch things are propagated; and propagated they will be ſo long as men believe their Prince an enemy to the pure Doctrines and Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, and themſelves perſecuted for complyance with Chriſt's Laws in oppoſition to the ſuperſtitious Impoſitions of their Governours. For conſidering the weakneſs of men, and the ſlender improvement the education of moſt give them, how can we imagine Magiſtrates ſhould have their due honour and eſteem from ſuch perſons, who are made to believe, that they ſymbolize with Antichriſt, and are Friends to the cauſe and Intereſt of the Beaſt? No alack! ſuch crafty inſinuations as theſe waſte all the Principles of Loyalty in eaſy and credulous mens breaſts, they imbitter and poyſon their Spirits ſo that they ſpit nothing but fire in the face of all well regulated Conſtitutions, and there is nothing but the fear of impriſonment, or confiſcation of Goods, or the loſs of life that keeps theſe men thus ſet on fire, from offering violence

to

to the Thrones of Princes. It was this that made Henry *the Third and the Fourth of* France *fall under the bloudy hands of two Aſſaſſinates; and though our modern Enthuſiaſts and the Papiſts widely differ in many things, yet in a miſtaken furious Zeal, and reſolute enterprizes for the miſtaken cauſe of God, and his Church, they have been both very much to blame, and incurred ſuch a cenſure as, thanks be to God, the regular Sons of the Church of* England *can waſh their hands from.*

Now this being very plain and notorious, I thought I could not do a better work, one whereby I might better ſerve my Prince and Countrey, than by endeavouring to reconcile men to a Church, wherein they learn the duties of humility and meekneſs, of modeſty and candour of ſpirit, of ſubmiſſion and obedience, of jealouſie and ſuſpicion of their own private opinions, when they ſtand in competition with the publick Judgment and Wiſdom of the Nation. For theſe are vertues hugely ſerviceable to the intereſt of Government, and preſerve ſuch a peace amongſt men, as gives great

encouragement to industry and labour. These are Vertues that render Religion *amiable and lovely, and no doubt the more Professors are possessed of them, the more do they engage standers by not only to an admiration of, but an hearty complyance with that* Religion, *that cancels no worthy* Law, *that is made in pursuit of the ends of* Government, *but on the other side lays obligations upon every man to keep his place, denouncing severely against those, who either curse their Princes in their hearts, or speak evil of Dignities with their tongues. And let me speak freely, That I am very much mistaken, if a return to so good a spirit as this, is going to* Egypt *again, is siding with the Beast against God and his Christ, is renouncing the Kingship of Christ; which words by whom made use of, and to what purposes we can easily tell.*

If this be a forsaking of Christ and giving up his cause, and going into Babylon, *I pray God I may continue in this* Babylon *all the days of my life: and then, notwithstanding all those threats denounced against us, for conforming to the superstitions*

ſtitions of the Church, I do not doubt but we ſhall find as fair and ready acceptance at the laſt day, as any of theſe hot-ſpurs can promiſe to themſelves.

But this is not all that I have to plead for my ſelf, and this preſent undertaking. I had continued and lived in that famous City of London *for many years, and received very conſiderable marks of kindneſs from many of the inhabitants thereof, and therefore thought my ſelf bound in gratitude to do any thing that might contribute towards its happineſs and welfare. And upon a juſt ſurvey of the influence of Fanatical Principles upon the minds of many men, I could not wind my ſelf out of a perſwaſion, but that theſe practices would ſooner or later be the occaſions of much miſchief to that ancient Metropolis.*

It was the cuſtome of the free Denizons of that place formerly to attend thoſe publick Ordinances which were adminiſtred in their own Pariſh Churches, by their own legally ſettled Miniſters, and gravely, to the admiration of all ſtrangers, who either out of curioſity or buſineſs viſited

that place, to walk to thoſe places in the head of their Families, and the ſubordinate Members thereof in their ſeveral ranks and orders following after, and all of them uſing the ſame decorum in their returning home. Now beſides the reputation this gave to the City, there was a bridle by it put into the mouth of youth, and whileſt in their Maſters eye, they were obliged to carry themſelves in thoſe publick places of Worſhip, as became the Solemnity, and with that reverence and attention, that ſuch approaches to ſo great a being as God is, called for at their hands. A cuſtome certainly which was the foundation of great proportions of vertue and goodneſs, and very inſtrumental to ſeaſon the minds of young ones, with ſuch principles as might give very great hopes to their Parents as well as others, of their future well doing in the World, of their being Ornaments to the City, as well as Comforts to their Relations.

But ſince every man who could not live in the Countrey, hath had confidence enough to ſet up for a publick Teacher in the City,

City, and every corner almoſt of the Streets, hath tempted men with new faces, and new voices, alas! this excellent cuſtome hath been very much laid aſide, and what will be the noiſome and peſtilent conſequence of it I dread to think. For when the Maſter runs one way, and Miſtreſs another, and every Servant hath the liberty of gratifying his own humour, and pleaſing his own fancy, 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be order kept under that roof, or that an houſe ſo divided againſt it ſelf, ſhould long ſtand in peace, and from hence muſt needs proceed pride and cenſoriouſneſs, quarrelling one amongſt another about the beſt man and the beſt way, and ſometimes contempt of the Maſter on the Servants ſide, becauſe he is not ſo fully enlightned as to hear and ſavour ſuch a precious man, as he himſelf does, I and it may be making (for Morality is a ſorry thing with many of theſe men) the next bargain in his Maſters ſhop, pay for his laſt Sabbaths profiting by the ſavory doctrine of ſuch a ſearching Preacher.

But these are not the only impeachments I design against these courses. We all know very well, that that part of a mans age in which usually he is a Servant, is a part wherein the proritations of nature begin to be strong and violent, and young mens inclinations very eager after such objects as are suitable to their senses, and depraved desires. And now what if these young men, in their journeys through those several streets, with purpose to hear this or the other man, should be invited into a Tavern, or a worse house by idle companions, nay what if some of them should make it their pretence to their Masters purely to get opportunities to indulge themselves in such brutish and sensual enjoyments, would it not be far better to have seen them safely lodged in their Parish Churches? I surely this is without dispute.

And though it may be some may say this is an uncharitable and irreligious suggestion of mine own, yet let them not provoke me too much, lest I prove it by plain instances. And alack when Youth before they have entred into serious consideration of things,

things, before they have had time to make ſuch obſervations as would be helpful to their future carriage and deportment in the World, before the Notices of Religion, which they received in their firſt education, be fetched from the brain, and ſettled in the Heart, when youth I ſay by ſuch careleſneſs of their Maſters have worn off the modeſty of their minds, and contracted habits of ſin, what will be the end of it? but diſhoneſty to their Maſters, grief to their Relations, and ruine to themſelves.

I know this thing will be very grievous to many, whoſe purſes as well as meeting-places are fill'd by ſuch company, but I will aſſure them the reflection upon it hath been every way (out of that paſſionate eſteem I have for that famous City) as burthenſome to me, and my private complaints of it to ſeveral worthy Citizens hath raiſed in them a fear ſuitable to mine own of the inconveniences of ſuch a liberty to youth. And therefore let me conclude this with this aſſertion, that I have not publiſhed this upon the ſcore of any ſpight or malice I have againſt any particular man,

who differs from the publick Conſtitution, but purely out of pity to thoſe young men, who are committed to the care and government of ſuch Maſters, who by vertue of their very Principles put their Servants under the temptation of being ruined; for he that gives leave to ſuch raw perſons, to carve what ſpiritual food they pleaſe for themſelves, whoſe years call for authoritative reſtraints, and prudent boundaries, does I am ſure lend an helping hand to their deſtruction.

And further I heartily deſire theſe Maſters to conſider whether their conſtant diſobedience to Authority, and violating the known Laws and ſtatutes of the Realm, be not a greater encouragement to, and plea for the Servants rebelling againſt them, than any wiſe man would put into their hands? and withal whether the juſtice of God may not be provoked to chaſtiſe this their contempt of his Vicegerents by wicked and treacherous ſervants?

But theſe are not all the Articles I have to draw up againſt theſe ways of ſeparation, and conſequently not the whole vindication

I can make of this undertaking. I found by the unworthy reflections of many of the Nonconformists upon the present establishment of the Church, both in their Prayers and Preachings, that Sacred and separated Order of men, who by a divine commission are dedicated to serve at the Altar, brought into a general dislike, nay contempt among the populacy. And though most of them are men of generous educations, and admitted to a freedom of converse with men of the best rank and sort, even from their first entrance into the Universities, yet so heated are the fancies of many persons by the influence of those bad names that are given them by the Heads of the Faction, that many times they meet with rude assaults, and unprovoked accosts as they pass the streets, nay even the Children, who through the immaturity of their years can discern neither good nor evil, are taught to point at such persons whose decent garbs declare them to be Clergy-men. Now when I considered with my self, how necessary this Order of men is not only upon the score of that Divine Authority by which

which it is eſtabliſhed in Scripture, but upon the account of policy and prudence, without the influence of whom upon the Minds of men, neither Governours ſhall keep their chairs, nor governed their bounds, but all things will be managed by heats and paſſions, by pride and ambition, by corrupt inclinations and fond deſires, by ways and methods that are directly oppoſite to the commands of true Religion and Reaſon, to the Intereſt of States and Kingdomes, why I muſt tell you, this reflection did not a little encourage me to any juſt undertaking, whereby I might abate the eſteem theſe perſons have, and put them out of a capacity of doing ſo great a miſchief as to ſettle prejudices in the minds of people againſt ſo neceſſary an Order of men as the Miniſters are. But becauſe I have given ſome plain hints of this in the enſuing diſcourſe, I will proceed no further upon this head, and therefore

Further I conſidered many Doctrines and darling Notions of this party of men, which are the common Theams and ſubjects of their diſcourſe, and which indeed they vent

vent with ſuch a zeal as if all Religion was concerned and wrapt up in them, I ſay I conſidered them well, and found them really prejudicial to the progreſs of Religion in the hearts and lives of men; and upon that account I could not think my ſelf injurious to religion nor evilly deſigned againſt Gods People, by undertaking a work wherein theſe men now and then meet with ſuch juſt Reproofs and ſeaſonable rebukes as their deſerts call for: Why ſhould men who have mixt their own inventions with Chriſts excellent Goſpel, and preſs them with an equal neceſſity upon the belief of their eaſy hearers, run away with the credit and reputation of being Gods Elect, who hear his voice, and keep cloſe to his Ordinances, without blending them with any corrupt mixtures of their own, when in the mean time no men peſter the World with newer notions, and falſer gloſſes upon the ſacred Texts of Scripture than they? give me leave though I might name many to inſtance in theſe two.

First, That darling and ſerviceable Notion of praying by the Spirit, by which little elſe is meant, if their meaning may

be

be gathered from their expreſſions, or at leaſt as it is underſtood, (and they content it ſhould be ſo) by the Common people, but a bold and confident uttering of a mans ſelf to God in variety of words, with a readineſs and fluency for ſome conſiderable time together. And he that hath got to this perfection, oh how gracious a man is he preſently proclaimed? what an intimate and familiar acquaintance with God? How dear to Jeſus Chriſt? and it is ten to one but he is ſent out by vote and ſuffrage to be a pillar to ſupport the Cauſe, and ſaluted by the wealthy Dames as their ſpiritual Guide and Paſtor; for upon him is made good the prophecy of Zechariah, *and the Spirit if Prayer and Supplication is poured out upon him.*

Now what a vile and falſe account is this of the Spirit of Prayer, which if rightly weighed, conſiſts in nothing elſe, but in mens addreſſing to God, with a deep and profound ſenſe of his Majeſty, with a belief of his placability through the ſatisfaction that was made by Chriſts oblation of himſelf once for all upon the Croſs, with inward deſires ſuitable to the Nature and

Neceſſity

Neceſſity of the things we want and petition for, with reſentment of mind agreeable to the ſins and impieties we have wandred into, and with Principles of gratitude for what we have enjoyed, expreſſing and diſplaying themſelves by thankful acknowledgments and publick returns. And whether this be done with words choſen beforehand or otherways, it is all one to God, for words reach not him at all, but are only neceſſary in prayer, when we are embodyed, and one man is the Mouth of others to him.

Now this being the true Notion of praying by the ſpirit, or of the ſpirit of Prayer, which is the more proper way of expreſſing it, would not any man wonder that men pretending to ſo much Godlineſs, ſhould thus bring it from the heart the principal ſeat thereof, and lay it all as it were upon the tip of the tongue? would not any man admire theſe men ſhould put ſuch an advantage into the hypocrites hands to cheat and impoſe upon the unwary part of the world? for let them be never ſo fond of this Notion, yet they muſt know, if they be impartial in their reflections upon the actions of the ages

paſt,

paſt, that by this way numbers have been ſeduced into all manner of Hereſies and Blaſphemies, and he that could utter himſelf as if he were tranſported, and could talk of God as if he lay in his Breaſt, let his opinions or deſigns be what they would, yet he hath not wanted followers and admirers, and this will be ſo long, as ſo great a part of the World is ſilly, and caught with ſhadows inſtead of ſubſtance.

Now when men once come (which makes to my deſign in hand) to make ſuch things as theſe which are merely artificial, and depend very much upon the temperature of body, and confidence of mind, to be the meaſure of Religion, and ſigns of Grace, alas they often fall off from that juſt reſpect and value they owe to moral goodneſs and eſſential righteouſneſs, which is the life and ſoul of true Religion, and the whole ſtreſs of their zeal is laid out in little elſe, but keeping of days of their own appointment, wherein they may gratifie the pride and frothineſs of their Spirits, in making long harangues, and thereby gaining the applauſe of illiterate people as men inſpired,

which

which faculty if but attained to by men of design, as we know many times it hath been, it is not to be imagined what tricks and cheats they are empowered thereby to put upon the Vulgar, and how chearfully after they have by their melting expressions broken the peoples hearts, they carry home the Pieces in their pockets, I and laugh at them too for being so easily gulled and deluded.

But in the mean time I desire any man to tell me, whether this prove not very destructive to Religion, *both as it swells and elevates the minds of those who are Masters of this ready and as they call it powerful utterance, and then as the unwary and sometimes blasphemous expressions, which hastily through the present heat of their Animal Spirits drop from their mouths, render first* God *cheap and vile to standers by, and then that important duty of Prayer it self nauseous and burthensome. And to speak freely, I know nothing hath made greater matter of sport to Atheists, and hath more strengthened them in their Atheistical notions, than such bold and sawcy addresses to* God, *which some of these men*

men (for God forbid I ſhould accuſe all) have been guilty of.

For what conceit can they have of a Being, to whom men pretending ſo great a veneration, talk ſo rudely, as if like the Heathen Gods he were to be propitiated by fawning words and flattering titles, by unmanlike whynes and diſtorted faces? And therefore I do beſeech theſe men who have ſo unhappily got ſuch a power over the Common people into their hands, as to perſwade them almoſt to any thing, to be more worthy and ſincere in their inſtructing of them, and to remember that when the illiterate and meaner ſort of people are once encouraged by them to ſuch an unlimited exerciſe of their gifts, that they grow proud and haughty, and their little knowledg puffs them up ſo that within a ſhort time they grow too wiſe for their Teachers, and ſet up for themſelves. And here hath begun this Nations ruine, and Religions bane; from hence London *hath become another* Amſterdam, *and every mechanick fellow hath aſſumed the confidence to be a Teacher of the people. And therefore I am the more*

ſorry

Sorry that men pretending to learning and wiſdom ſhould propagate a notion ſo every ways new, and withal of ſo pernicious effect and conſequence, and that ſo lately experienced too.

But leſt by what I have ſaid under this Head I ſhould give any diſtaſte to truly good and wiſe men, I ſhall conclude it with the words of that incomparable and never to be forgotten perſon King Charles *the Firſt, in which, Reader, thou haſt the full ſenſe of my mind in this particular.* That though I am not againſt a grave and modeſt, diſcreet and humble uſe of Miniſters gifts, even in publick, the better to fit and excite their own and the peoples affections to the preſent occaſion, yet I know no neceſſity why private and ſingle abilities ſhould quite juſtle out and deprive the Church of the joynt abilities, and concurrent gifts of many learned and godly men, ſuch as the compoſers of the Service-book were. Εικὼν βασιλ.

2. *The other Notion which I think very prejudicial to Chriſtianity in the Hearts and Lives of people, is that of the Spirit*

of bondage; A very great doctrine with the Nonconformists, and often in their mouths, though according to their description of it, I profess I can find no footsteps of it in all the New Testament, and yet certainly had it been so absolutely a necessary preparative to true conversion as they make it, we should have had an account both of the thing it self and withal of some signs and tokens, whereby we might know when we were in it, and how to get out of it, of all which the Gospel is silent. For that place of St. Paul *wherein he says,* we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, *relates to the* Jewish Oeconomy, *and is miserably perverted and wrested, as many of his other sayings are, when quoted to justifie these mens doctrines of the bondage state. But because I know many persons will be desirous to know, what this thing is I am now accusing them of, I will therefore give them this brief account.*

Instead of defining Conversion and Regeneration, to be a real change of the Mind founded upon a sense and fear of God, and a true love to Christ, and upon a consideration

tion of ſin as an enemy to all thoſe glorious Attributes wherewith the Divine Majeſty is clothed, and by which he hath manifeſted himſelf to the World, and inſtead of engaging a man to an utter abhorrence and forſaking of all ſin for the time to come, and to a vigorous purſuit of all thoſe neceſſary vertues and graces which make up an holy life; all which words are plain, and eaſily derived into the moſt ordinary underſtanding; why theſe men tell you that before the work of converſion be wrought, and the man thereby entitled to the favour and love of God, he muſt be kept in a legal ſtate, and chains and fetters muſt be clapped upon his feet, and the Law muſt hunt him down ſo, that in his ſoul there muſt be a ſoul confounding horrour, a ſoul diſtreſſing anguiſh, and a ſoul diſtracting deſpair, *and God muſt appear to him for ſome time together as an angry Judge without one ſmile in his Countenance, and take him by the hair of the head, and then throw him into a diſconſolate dungeon, where not the leaſt light muſt ſpring through the moſt minute creviſe into his ſoul. And when the man hath*

been by this way ſufficiently humbled, why then in time he ſhall have comfort adminiſtred to him, and be brought into the green and pleaſant meadows of the Goſpel, and a ſpirit within him ſhall enable him to cry Abba Father. And all this muſt be preached as abſolutely neceſſary, ſo that ſome good men through ſuch ſuggeſtions have been very much troubled at themſelves as Hypocrites, becauſe they were not brought to the obedience of the Goſpel, by ſuch rackings and convulſions of mind as theſe.

But now as this notion is falſe, ſo it is very pernicious, and hugely ſlackens the exerciſe of true godlineſs.

For how much time hath been ſpent by this means, in grievous complaints, in fearful apprehenſions of God, in poſting from one place to another for ſatisfaction, in inveighing againſt themſelves, as if they were the veryeſt monſters upon the earth, which might to better purpoſe have been ſpent in thoſe Inſtrumental parts of Religion, to wit, Prayer and Meditation, &c. from any of which heartily performed there naturally ſprings into the mind, not

diſturbed

disturbed by troublesome and clouded fancies, joy and comfort; so that this Bondage state rather casts a man behind-hand, than any ways helps him in his religious progress.

Further, how many persons wearied with long expectations and waitings for the comforts they are promised, at last have thrown off all Religion, and looked upon it, and the Teachers of it to be nothing else but cheats, and that such melancholy thoughts have been imposed upon them on purpose to keep them in dependence upon the insolent and pragmatical Priests.

And further, how many people who have been under the disadvantage of a melancholy complexion, have been so terrified with these unworthy and wrong thoughts of God, and have been kept so long under the power of them by some spiritual Empiricks, that to be rid of them, they have laid violent hands upon themselves. And then lastly this Doctrine is so very mechanical, and the Body is so much concerned in it, and the Reason and understanding of men so little, that it makes way for all

the Enthuſiaſm in the World, and becomes the Mother of all thoſe wild fancies, the World theſe latter days hath been too ſadly acquainted withal. And whether Religion get any ground by ſuch things let any man judge, or how thoſe men deſerve to be cryed up as the only ſpiritual Preachers, who vent Doctrines ſo deſtructive to Religion, I cannot tell.

And now Reader after I have begged thy pardon for this tedious preface, (though I muſt confeſs I did not deſign it much ſhorter, when I firſt entred upon it,) I muſt tell thee that I am not alone in my high eſteem for the Church of England; *No, there are thouſands in the Kingdom, and thoſe men too whoſe excellent and Regular lives, and whoſe univerſal learning may juſtly beſpeak them a place amongſt the moſt improved men, who are ready to defend this Church with both their Tongues and Pens, and of ſuch I will only name two, the one is that incomparable perſon Dr.* Stillingfleet, *who in his Sermon upon* Matth. 21. 43. *Pag.* 158. *calls this Church one of the beſt Churches in the Chriſtian World; and in the*

ſame

ſame place complains that it ſhould puzzle the wiſeſt of men to find out expedients to keep it from ruine. The other is that excellent, and no leſs laborious than learned, Dr. Tillotſon, *in a Sermon before the King, where he tells us,* that he had been according to his opportunities, not a negligent obſerver of the Genius and Humour of the ſeveral Sects and Profeſſions in Religion, and upon the whole matter that he does in his Conſcience believe the Church of *England* to be the beſt conſtituted Church this day in the Chriſtian World, and that as to the main, the Doctrine and Government and Worſhip of it are excellently framed to make men ſoberly religious, ſecuring men on the one hand from the wild freaks of Enthuſiaſm, and on the other hand from the groſs follies of ſuperſtition. *But if thou wilt neither believe them nor me for our bare ſaying ſo, read the following diſcourſe without prejudice; and if through the ſtrength of thy former received apprehenſions, thou wilt not wholly be drawn over to us, yet I hope thou wilt be*

ſo far convinced, as to believe that neither the Church nor her Officers and publick Diſpenſers are ſo bad and obnoxious, as ſome men through weakneſs and others through malice have repreſented them.

Farewell.

POSTSCRIPT.

Reader,

THe two firſt ſheets of this ſmall book were moſt of them preached before the Judges of Aſſize at Chelmsford *in* Eſſex, *and therefore if thou findeſt any thing in them as an Appeal to them, I pray impute it to that. Further Reader, I muſt deſire thee if thou meeteſt with the word* [why] *uſed improperly, as ſometimes I find upon a peruſal of the ſheets it is, impute it to cuſtome and a mode of ſpeaking, upon which ſcore it dropt ſo unwarily from my Pen. Whatſoever other faults there are, give me but the common allowance the ordinary miſcarriages of a Preſs require, and I will ask no more.*

THE

THE

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A *MODEST PLEA* FOR THE CHURCH of ENGLAND.

John VI. 68.

Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.

ALL Societies and incorporated Bodies, Religious as well as Civil, are preſerved by Love and Union, by being knit and keeping cloſe together; and whatſoever Principles they are, that have any tendency to diſperſe and ſcatter, to divide and ſeparate men in their Judgments and Affections, they ought to be ſhunned and abandoned, as the underminers not only of mens peace, and comfortable abode together, but of

their real ſafety and ſecurity; and every man ought to fear the imbibing and ſucking of them in, as he does the moſt violent Poyſon; the leaſt dram of which is enough to infect thoſe vital parts, which keep the body in good heart and plight. For ſuch principles they heat mens fancies and naturally make them proud and inſolent; and nothing can ſatisfie thoſe who are commanded by them but Rule and Government, Authority and Dominion; and to curb and rein them in, as to any thing they have placed their Paſſions on, is to make them, like the wild Bull entangled in a faſt-knotted Net, full of rage and fury, overthrowing every thing, with an impetuous violence, that ſtands in their way to the enjoyment of their deſired object; and neither the Thrones of Princes, nor the Stalls of Prelates ſhall eſcape their rude Tongues, nor their ruder Hands, but both the one and the other, muſt be torn down on purpoſe to be a ſacrifice to their Revenge and Luſt, to their Malice and evil Nature.

He that looks into Hiſtory, and by the advantage of his ſtanding in the World, can reflect upon the laſt thirty years Tranſactions in this Kingdom, will quickly ſatisfie himſelf in this. He will find by vertue of ſuch Principles, the beſt of Princes murthered; and that, which demonſtrates the miſchievous influence of theſe Principles indeed, this horrid and unaccountable

able Action done with all the pretences of Law and Juſtice, of Piety and Religion. Further, upon an eaſie ſearch he will find the beſt of Churches, framed with all advantages for the keeping up of the Purity of Religion, and yet preſerving that juſt honour and Grandeur, that belongs both to its Service, and its Officers; this very Church, firſt treated with ſcorn and reflected upon with the moſt bitter Sarcaſmes, and then robbed without the leaſt Pity, though I am ſure with great Diſhoneſty: with abundance of other ſpreading Evils, which did theſe men take no more pleaſure to act than I do to name, they would not be ſo common in the world. And therefore it being ſo, it ought to be the care of every one of us to uſe our utmoſt diligence to diſcountenance, and, if poſſible, to bury all thoſe Principles, from which we have experienced, and do withal foreſee ſo dreadful miſchiefs; and if we cannot do it by Arguments and Reaſon, the force of which through Prejudice and intereſt is reſiſted, why, thoſe with whom the execution of the Laws is entruſted, the Civil Magiſtrates, according to their Oaths ought to puniſh the Propagators and Spreaders of them. And that they may be encouraged to ſo good a work, and ſo very neceſſary at this time, without which we muſt needs be involved in a certain, if not ſpeedy ruine, theſe words are choſen to be treated upon at this time; *Lord*,

to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life. The Sence of which words, without any reflection upon the occaſion of them, in brief is this: That ſo long as men can enjoy the clear Methods of Salvation, and have all thoſe neceſſary Means and Helps, that the wants of their Souls require, in order to eternal happineſs; ſo long as nothing is impoſed upon them either in Belief or Practice, that naturally tends to obſtruct and hinder the progreſs of Holineſs and Religion in mens Minds; ſo long as men may under that Diſpenſation in which they were born and bred, as eaſily, nay ſooner attain thoſe divine Qualifications, thoſe excellent Diſpoſitions, thoſe needful Graces, and uſeful Vertues which the Goſpel commands every mans endeavour after, than they can under any other; So long as the Society to which they are united, is a true Society, in which are all Adminiſtrations according to the injunction of him who is the Maſter of it, why, whither ſhould we go from it in order to better, and mend our ſelves? Let us run into what Tents we pleaſe, let us betake our ſelves to what numbers of men we can, that magnifie themſelves with the moſt glorious Titles, and profeſs themſelves the only Favourites and Intimadoes of the Holy Jeſus; why, yet we can but attain to eternal Life, and that I am ſure to as good, nay better purpoſes, all things conſidered, we may do where we are already;

already; and therefore, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go?* for in that Church, in which thou haſt planted us, and in that Church, which thou haſt for ſo many years watered with thy bleſſing, we may have eternal Life; and if men can honeſtly propound any other End in chooſing either their Religion or their Opinions beſides gaining this eternal Life, why, let them follow their own Fancies, and be led by the wild-fire of their own headlong imaginations. And now I ſuppoſe by this time you may eaſily ſee into my Deſign, which conſiſts of theſe two things.

1. To prove, That we of this Church have all neceſſary Advantages for gaining of eternal Life, and therefore have no juſt occaſion to run away, and ſeparate from it.

2. To inquire, How it comes to paſs that a Church in which we have all the Advantages for getting eternal Life, ſhould meet with ſuch Contempt and Diſregard, ſhould be in ſo ſick and declining a Condition?

But before I enter upon either of theſe, I muſt needs make this Proteſtation, That, I bleſs God, I come not here to expreſs mine own private Paſſions, nor to act revenge for any particular injury I have received from thoſe who by their Poſitions, and their Practiſes do inſinuate into the belief of the credulous World, that we of this Church do ſhut men out of eternal Life. No, had it not been for an hearty

zeal I have for the Church my Mother, and for all your Intereſts, as they are wrapt up in this Churches Happineſs, I could eaſily have choſe a Subject that would have run more ſmoothly, as to ſome mens apprehenſions and affections, and given, it may be, leſs diſpleaſure. But, *jacta eſt alea*; here I ſtand; and conſidering the Circumſtances in which you Noble and Worthy Perſons are, the Truſt committed to you, and the Oaths that are upon you to diſcharge that Truſt, I will be plain, and if I muſt be cenſur'd for it, I will bear it patiently, becauſe 'tis for my love to the beſt conſtituted Government in the World: Therefore

1. I will prove that we have all neceſſary Advantages in this Church, of which we are Members, for eternal Life, and therefore need not go away from it: which will beſt appear if we conſider what is abſolutely neceſſary to the gaining of this eternal Life. And upon enquiry we find but two things, in neither of which, I am ſure, the Church of *England* is wanting or deficient. 1. A ſound Belief of all neceſſary Articles and Propoſitions of Faith. 2. An holy Practice of all Duties that are enjoyned us.

1. For a ſound belief of all things neceſſary in order to eternal Life, we ſtand upon as good ground as any ſort of men in the Chriſtian World. For our Belief is of nothing but what

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is plainly laid down, or eaſily deduced out of Holy Scripture, and there is not an Article which we can ſay was framed by a Pack of Men met together barely to advance an Intereſt, or ſerve a Paſſion. We hear nothing in all the Thirty Nine, of the neceſſary belief of a fictitious *Purgatory*, or a Senſe-contradicting *Tranſubſtantiation*: We are not commanded under the pain of Hell and Ruine, to believe the *Infallibility* of an uſurping Pope, or the *Meritoriouſneſs* of good Works: We meet with none of thoſe *Trent*-doctrines, that were framed by faction, and voted to no other purpoſe than to keep up the preſent Pomp and Grandeur of the Court of *Rome*, which were at firſt ſtarted by intereſt, and have ever ſince (to the violation of the Peace of *Europe*) been kept on foot by Pride. Nor is the Lawfulneſs of taking up Arms againſt our Soveraign, when he, as we fancie, will not promote Religion, and advance Gods Glory, and ſecure the Intereſt of his elect and darling People in their Civil and Religious Priviledges, one of the Articles of our Faith. No, no, our Belief is of ſuch things as are in Scripture, and were entertained as Doctrines and determined ſo (in ſubordination to the Authority of Scriptures) by the four firſt General Councils. And indeed our Church would have been very much to blame, if under a pretence of rooting out unneceſſary

and ungrounded Articles of Faith, ſhe had invented others as uſeleſs, and as dangerous, having neither face nor footing in the Holy Scriptures. This would have been to have propagated Diviſion ſo long as the world had ſtood, and given others too great an occaſion to believe that it was not Conſcience, but ſome other Principle, of another Dye, that put them upon a Separation from the Church of *Rome*. And therefore ſhe took care that the Terms of her Communion in point of Doctrine ſhould be few and obvious; ſuch as no man that is not obſtinate and reſolved ſhould deny a ready complyance with: and if any man can riſe up and prove, that there is one Doctrine that hath any malign or poyſonous influence either upon mens Underſtandings, or elſe upon their Manners, I will ſtand obliged to quit the power I have of mine own diſpoſal, and ſurrender my ſelf his Bonds-man. Nay, ſo little liable are our declared Doctrines to any Imputation, ſo unqueſtionably agreeable to Holy writ (the Proteſtant Standard of all Doctrines,) that our very Adverſaries themſelves cannot in all their Declamations againſt our Church, forbear extolling the exact Care and Wiſdom of our firſt Reformers in this particular, and moſt of them teſtifie their readineſs to ſubſcribe to the Truth thereof, as I could prove from their declared Opinions in ſeveral of their printed Treatiſes.

Yea,

Yea, if need be, I could make good this following Story, which I think is no ſmall Vindication of our Churches Doctrines, That one of them who is now the Oracle of their Party, to whom upon all occaſions they apply themſelves, and in whoſe judgment they repoſe no little confidence, though I ſhall not name him, becauſe he hath been brought ſo much upon the Stage already; I ſay, I could make good that this very Perſon, when being intruſted, and invited to aſſiſt in drawing up ſomething which might be a band of Union, and enlarge the Pale of this preſent Church, did propoſe that our Articles might be reduced to ThirtySix, (though, but for his affected ſingularity, he might as well have ſaid Thirty and nine) and thoſe made the Conditions of our Communion. And according to the wonted Clemency of moſt of thoſe, who call for Toleration, when they cannot rule and govern, preſſed that whoever refuſed Subſcription to them, ſhould undergo the penalty of being baniſhed his Native Kingdom; an Expreſſion that begot in the breaſt of a late Reverend Prelate, that ſate by, a reſentment agreeable to his known Candour and Moderation, and extorted from him a ſmart reproof of the haughty Separatiſt for his apparent Cruelty: and All this I think makes good that 'tis not our Doctrine from which theſe men can fetch the Grounds and Reaſons of their going from us.

2. Let

2. Let us therefore deſcend to the other thing requiſite to Eternal Life, which is an holy and upright Practice, a well-compoſed Life, and a regular Converſation, which are the chiefeſt things in which Holineſs does conſiſt; and he who eſteems himſelf ſo upon any other ſcore, he labours under a very foul miſtake. For inſtance, He that Saints himſelf upon the account of ſome ſudden and vehement flaſhes of indiſcreet and ſulphureous Zeal, of ſome imagined Raptures, and ſuppoſed intimacy and correſpondence with all the three Perſons in the Trinity; he that ſtrokes his Breaſt, as the only acquaintance with God and Chriſt, purely for his liſting himſelf into ſuch a Party, and entertaining ſuch Opinions as the good Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians never had any knowledge or conviction of: further, he that hath no other Plea for his excelling Goodneſs, than his obſerving uncommanded Faſts, and ſlighting Days appointed by Authority for ſolemn Commemoration of paſt Bleſſings, and hearty petitions for Mercies wanted; he that hath no other way to make out his internal Graces, than by a ſolemn Winke and a meager Face, than by a ſcornful pity of the ignorance of his Betters, and bewailing with a doleful ſigh the carnal ſtate of his Neighbours, (though indeed they underſtand Religion in its Deſign and end every way better than himſelf) than by declining theſe publick

publick Places of Worſhip and running into the Camps of ſeparation; I ſay, he is falſe in the Meaſures he takes of himſelf, and does not weigh himſelf in a proper and allowed Ballance. For theſe things we find may be done by men of the moſt debauched Minds; by men every way wicked in their Principles: Nay, theſe things have been done, and taken up on purpoſe to carry on the moſt villainous Deſigns that Hiſtory can Parallel. And now in this Notion of Holineſs we will give other Churches leave to go before our own.

But if we take Holineſs in a Goſpel ſence, in a Converſation ſuitable to thoſe ſeveral Circumſtances in which we are, thoſe ſeveral Relations in which we ſtand, thoſe ſeveral Dependencies that we have; Then I will ſay, why does any man go from this Church of ours? For here he hath all Advantages for Eternal Life. Take Man as he is Gods Creature, the Workmanſhip of his hands, and therefore bound to pay Homage and Fealty to him, which you know is moſt naturally done upon our knees by ſolemn Prayer; Why, let me ſeriouſly beg of any wiſe man to inform me, what we want to this end by way of help and aid in our ſo much deſpiſed Church? We are permitted, nay commanded, to *pray to God* in a *Tongue* that is *known*; we pray by words apt and ſignificative of the ſence they bear, and with Prayers abounding with

that

that ſence, which no man that is unprejudiced and wiſe can except againſt: We pray to God through *Jeſus Chriſt*, preſuming neither upon our own worth and *merit*, nor yet upon the *Interceſſion* of any *Saint* or *Angel*; and whether this be not as good a way to expreſs all our thoughts and affections, as by any uncertain extemporary effuſion, where we are not certain of avoiding rude and ſaucy periods, and of hearing things ſometimes bordering upon Blaſphemy, and oftner upon nonſence, I leave you all, who can make juſt reflections upon things, to judge. In a word; In our Prayers we have as great advantages to pray by the *Spirit*, it being taken in its proper ſence, nay greater than others, who pretend ſo highly to it, have: And the reaſon is, becauſe we engage this Spirit to come in to our help and aid, by our orderly compliance with thoſe Duties of Submiſſion and Obedience to Authority, which this Spirit it ſelf hath ſo ſtrictly enjoyned in Holy Scripture: And you know our Saviour tells us, *Luke* 8. 18. *To him that hath ſhall be given*, that is, the more Graces and Vertues our Souls are adorned withall, the more ſtill will God bleſs us in the improvement of them.

2. If we take a view of thoſe Advantages we have for Eternal Life by Preaching, by wholeſome Documents and Inſtructions; why, I am not afraid to ſay that we have no Reaſon to throw

throw our ſelves out of our Mothers Arms upon this account, or to forſake her for the dryneſs of her Breaſts; for ſo long as we are told all things neceſſary to Salvation, and thoſe ſeveral preſſing Reaſons why we ought to practiſe them, (and indeed he muſt be a very ordinary man who is clothed with ſacred Orders, and cannot teach us this:) Why, though it be our allotment to be under the guidance of a Miniſter, who cannot deliver himſelf with that affection, whoſe Temper of Body will not allow him ſuch degrees of becoming Zeal; why, we muſt make up that want in him, by raiſing our own Affections, in our retirements, before we attend the Publick, to an higher pitch, and better ſtrain; and then I am ſure every thing that is Divine, and tends to Holineſs, though not pronounced with that advantage others do, yet will be welcome and delightſome to us: For it is not, commonly, ſo much the Dulneſs of the Man we hear, as the Deadneſs of our Affections to him, that makes us complain of the unprofitableneſs of his Miniſtery. And I have known ſeveral, who ſo long as Intereſt or Acquaintance, or any thing elſe of equal influence, hath kept up their kindneſs or affection to any publick Preacher, they have followed him with greedineſs, heard him with attention, and praiſed him to exceſs; and their Minds never received greater advantage nor their Affections a more

vigorous

vigorous warmth, than under ſuch a Perſon's Miniſtery: And yet all of a ſudden, let but an unſeaſonable quarrel ariſe, and their former correſpondence be abated, and a grudge or two ſpring up, either upon a little or no Reaſon, in their minds, and preſently the ſame man becomes a flat and heavy Preacher, and they ſit very uneaſily under him, or elſe joyn themſelves to ſome other, who by chance hit their Fancy and Humour, when they were upon their ramble in order to find out one to profit by. But becauſe this is a mighty Pretence made by the preſent Separatiſts at this day, and a warrant, as they think, for their Diſobedience to the preſent Laws, I will make a few reflections upon it. And here 1. I will ſtate the Notion of profiting, and then conſider whether we may not ſufficiently profit according to that Notion under our eſtabliſh'd Paſtors and Teachers, without gadding after other men.

Now profiting can but poſſibly relate to theſe things; either to the Information of our Judgments, as to all things neceſſary to be believed and known; or elſe to the raiſing of our Affections in a juſt proportion to the Nature and Excellency of thoſe things ſo believed and known; or to a more even and reſolute Practice of them.

Firſt then as to the Information of our Judgments as to things neceſſary, we may certainly

tainly meet with it amongſt the allowed Teachers, eſpecially conſidering how few they are, and how they have been drawn up into a ſum by the Ancient Church: I confeſs my circumſtances call upon me to be oftner preachin gthan hearing, but yet this I muſt needs ſay, and I fear not a bluſh in ſaying of it, That as often as I can get opportunity to enjoy other mens Labours, I uſually meet with ſuch Diſcourſes, as may vie with thoſe mens, whatever they would perſwade the eaſie world to the contrary; eſpecially, which I have no reaſon to doubt, if their Popular Sermons be fraught with no more coherent Sence and Reaſon than their printed Diſcourſes are.

I do not love to make Reflexions upon any mans Labours, who deſigns a good to the World; and whatſoever Books publiſhed by theſe men have done any ſervice to the Minds of men, I heartily bleſs God for: But yet this I muſt needs ſay, That we may meet with Sermons from Perſons under the Countenance and Encouragement of our Church, that may equal any, nay, if I had ſaid, for ſtrength of Reaſon, for weightineſs of Argument, for fit and appoſite quotations of Texts of Scripture, for apt and proper Terms and Expreſſions, may be judged to excell any or moſt that the Brethren of the Separation have ſet forth, I think I had not tranſgreſſed the Lines of Truth: But my

Deſign

Deſign being to convince mens Judgments, and not to heat their Paſſions, I will forbear ſuch Compariſons. However, this I am ſure, (which ſerves my preſent undertaking) that we may from the authorized Miniſtery come to the knowledge of all Doctrines that are neceſſary; and he that does not preach them, and give ſuch Reaſons for them, as the Natures of ſuch things will bear, neither underſtands his Bible, nor yet hath well ſtudied thoſe Articles of the Church that he hath formally ſubſcribed unto: to ſuppoſe which of any Perſon dedicated by an Holy Office to God, I think is very uncharitable.

Well then, cannot you of the Separation, for to you I ſpeak theſe things, meet with as good Reaſons for the Being of a God, for the Truth of the *Meſſiah*, for the Neceſſity of Internal Holineſs, for the carrying your ſelves ſuitably to that Creature-ſtate in which you are, and ſo for all other Requiſites to be known, in our Legal places of Worſhip, and from Men inveſted with a Legal, as well as Divine Authority; as from others, who take up this publick way of Preaching without the allowance, nay, againſt the Command of the Laws of their Countrey? I tell you, to deny this, is to be proud and vain, and to arrogate too much to your ſelves. A fault too common amongſt ſome men, who would make others believe they

they are the moſt dead and mortified perſons in the World, and yet at the ſame time, care not whoſe Reputation they waſte and ſpoil, ſo they may advance their own.

2. The other way whereby we profit, is by having our Affections raiſed, ſuitably to the Nature and Excellency of things believed and known. Now, I muſt confeſs, while we are in the Body, and many Notices of things are conveyed into our Underſtandings through our Senſes, we have need of all agreeable helps to reconcile us wholly to Religion, and the ſeveral Duties of it; and he that hath the advantage of a mellow Voice, of a taking Delivery, of a Geſture not fantaſtical but winning upon the truly wiſe, as well as others, he ought to be eſteemed and loved, and the Church ought to judge her happineſs the greater, in having the aid and aſſiſtance of ſuch a Man. But alas! this is not founded in every mans Temper; and if ſome men would purchaſe it with all they do enjoy, it is not to be bought. And therefore where it is, 'tis to be prized, and where 'tis not, men ought not to be undervalued; for that is to be ſo unreaſonable, as to deſpiſe them for what they cannot help; nay, 'tis to reflect upon him that made them.

Well, but be it ſo, that theſe things contribute very much to the raiſing of our Paſſions; pray tell me, have the Nonconformiſts engroſ-

ſed this kind of Temperature of body to themſelves? can none but they ſpeak with loud voices, with a becoming *Pathos*, with a ſmart Accent? are all the dutiful Sons of the Church either troubled with Colds, or weakned by Catarrhs, or almoſt choaked as ſoon as they begin to ſpeak, with a defluxion of Rheum? and all this a Judgment upon them for their Conforming? No ſuch matter; let but theſe men lay aſide their prejudices, and attend our publick Churches, and they ſhall quickly find out men, whoſe behaviour in the Pulpit is as comely, whoſe Countenances are as grave and awful, whoſe Voices are as melodious and ſweet, whoſe Expreſſions are as weighty and well choſen, as any of the ſeparated Brethrens are; and conſequently, who are every way as well fitted by natural Gifts of Body, to raiſe mens Affections, as the others are: I and theſe men are not ſprinkled here and there, but you ſhall find them in moſt Countreys and Cities. And therefore no man can have any reaſon upon this account to leave our Church. And if this thing was but ſearched to the bottom, I believe we ſhould find ſomething elſe, beſides the Information of their Judgments, and the raiſing of their Affections, that theſe men place their profiting in; but I liſt not to render any perſons, pretending to Religion, ridiculous. However before I leave this head, I will venture

ture at ſo much, that when I conſider abundance of theſe People, that run into theſe holes and corners, how peeviſh and wayward they are, how proud and haughty, diſdaining every perſon that goes not along with them into the by-paths of Separation, reflecting upon them as poor carnal and ignorant Creatures: further, when I conſider how ignorant and illiterate many of them are, not underſtanding the common Reaſons that may be given for Religion, and thoſe ſeveral Truths that make up the Body of it; and how moſt of their skill and cunning chiefly conſiſts in repeating and making uſe of ſome broken pieces of Scriptures, and diſcourſing of Jeſus Chriſt in a rude and nonſenſical way: Further, when I conſider how little they underſtand the Difference betwixt us and them, and what ſlender Reaſons they give for their leaving our publick Worſhip, and how readily they follow any man that ſeparates, purely upon that ſcore, though his Principles do more widely differ from what they pretend are their own, than theirs from ours: Further, when I conſider the bitterneſs of their Spirits, expreſſed by their very angry looks, when they meet any of us in our accuſtomed Garbs; and by thoſe unchriſtian as well as ungentile and unmannerly Titles with which they load us: Why, theſe, with many other things that might be named, do perſwade me, that there is not ſo

much profit reaped by hearing theſe men, as they would make the World believe; for I am ſure theſe things argue much of the Leaven of the Phariſee, but nothing at all of the Temper and Spirit of the Goſpel: and he that hath no better Evidences than theſe, of his Saintſhip, I am ſure will find no other than the fooliſh Virgins entertainment at the laſt Day.

3. Let us take a view of the Advantages we have for Eternal Life, by a Holy Life, as this Holineſs is expreſſive of it ſelf in thoſe Duties that belong to man, eſpecially our Governours and Superiours. And here I am ſure the Members of our Church ſtand upon a better ground than any other ſort or profeſſion of men whatſoever; and for the defence of this Truth, I dare enter the Liſts both with the Conclave and the Claſſis at the ſame time together. Let any man, though prejudiced to the utmoſt, ſtand up, and tell me, where and when he hath met a man truly governed by the Principles of the Church of *England*, that hath taken the Sword into his hands, upon any pretence whatſoever, againſt his Lawful Soveraign; or that hath made it his trade and buſineſs to whiſper things againſt his Governours and to inſinuate Prejudices into the Minds of his Neighbours againſt the preſent management of Affairs.

Where can you find a man amongſt us, who, contrary to the Commands of his Lawful Soveraign

raign hath entred into an Oath, framed and drawn up on purpoſe to overthrow the Fundamental Rights and Priviledges of the people, as well as the Eſſential Prerogative of his Prince? much leſs can you ſhew me a man, managed by the Doctrine and declared Opinion of this Church, who hath ſhut the door, and kept cloſe Guards upon the Chief Magiſtrate of his Countrey, and after that hath barbarouſly embrued his hands in his Princes Blood. No, no, you muſt go beyond the *Alpes* and the *Tweed* to find out ſuch as theſe. The true Members of our Church are in this Particular untainted; and ſo far as men are under the guidance of her Paſtors, and the influence of her Diſcipline, ſo far they imitate the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; wherein men knew, how to advance the credit of their Religion, by ſuffering, but never by reſiſting: for they knew that Government was an Ordinance of God.

4. If we proceed further, and take a view of thoſe ſeveral Inſtances of Holineſs, which are expreſſed by an affable and modeſt Carriage to our Equals, by an extenſive Bounty to our inferiours, whoſe ſtraits and wants call for our relief; certainly we have in this Church as great Advantages for the exerciſing of theſe, as in any whatſoever. We have Bibles in our Houſes to read, and are allowed the reading of them as well as they, and I preſume we can read

as well as they; (for though ſome of them proudly do engroſs the Spirit, yet ſure they will leave the Letter to us:) and I think without pride, we may ſay, that we have Judgments and Underſtandings, to receive thoſe Notices of things the Word of God brings unto us; and if ſo, why may not we be in as good a Capacity to practiſe all thoſe Vertues, which theſe Relations call for, and are ſo plainly laid down in the Holy Word? Why may not we, if we exerciſe our Natural Abilities, and ſeriouſly weigh thoſe preſſing Arguments, that are fetched from Hopes and Fears, thoſe great Foundations of a pious Life; why, I ſay, may not we fix and eſtabliſh in our Minds, thoſe Divine Graces the Goſpel recommends unto us? ſuch as patience and Humility, Charity and Self-denial, Courage and Reſolution, Temperance and Chaſtity, *&c.* Eſpecially conſidering, we have the Spirit of God ready to help and cooperate with all our honeſt endeavours. For when our Adverſaries are cool and ſober, this they dare not deny; which if they do, as God knows, in ſome of their heats they are ſo unwary as to aſſert, why they are at the ſame time ſo monſtrouſly uncharitable as to call in Queſtion the Salvation of all thoſe Worthies of the Church that have been ever ſince the firſt Reformation; and our Judicious *Morton*, our Devout and Pious *Hall*, and our Learned

Sanderſon,

Sanderſon, with vaſt Numbers of others, muſt (according to theſe mens Opinions, that every Member of our Church, barely by being ſo, hath forfeited his Intereſt in Gods good Spirit's aſſiſtance) be adjudged to be now ſcorching in the Flames of Hell. A Cenſure, enough to ſtir the choler, and ferment the Blood of any man, who hath but the leaſt ſpark of Humanity left within him!

And though I know they plead for themſelves, that our Ordinances, which ſhould be the inſtruments to convey theſe Divine Principles and Graces into us, are ſtained by impure mixtures, by uncommanded Ceremonies; Why, when they can find out a Diſcipline without any Ceremony, purely fetched out of the Word of God, delivered in as plain and obvious terms as the Moſaick Diſpenſation was, and declared by God, that it was his will and pleaſure in every Circumſtance that that Government ſhould be maintained and ſubmitted unto; when they can preſent us with a Model having nothing of Humane and Prudential Determination in it, we will anſwer them; and to do it before, is at once to ſpend our Time and our Breath in vain. Only I take leave upon this occaſion to make this digreſſion, which I think is not unſuitable to the deſign I have in hand:

That I have been a very impartial Conſiderer of this Objection, and by vertue of my firſt

Converſe in the World, theſe and ſuch like ſuggeſtions from men whom I was taught to believe were the only Children of God, had a very fair hearing in my Breaſt, and I was willing to incline to thoſe Arguments propoſed by them for the Defence of that noiſe and buſtle they made in the World: But when I came afterwards to conſider the Authority wherewith Princes both upon Natural and Revealed Principles and Grounds are inveſted, and the miſerable confuſions that are conſequent upon ſlighting or reſiſting that Authority; when I conſidered the great Reaſons for making Laws, and the neceſſity of keeping up their reputation, and paying a conſtant Veneration to them, if we would be preſerved in any tolerable degrees of Peace and Safety: further, when I conſidered, that the very Reaſons why the Brethren of the Separation declare their diſlike of our Ceremonies, are diſowned by our Church; witneſs their declared Opinion of the Sign of the Croſs, and Kneeling at the Sacrament in the very Rubrick; and that theſe men are forced to make new and unheard of diſtinctions to render them unlawful, witneſs a Book printed ſome time ſince, by one of the Chiefs of them, againſt a Member of our Church: Further, when I conſidered, that if there was any Reaſon to ſcruple the Lawfulneſs of theſe things, yet it was not ſo great, nor ſo apparent, as the Reaſons againſt

againſt Schiſm and Diſobedience; and that the complying with the one could not poſſibly be ſo dangerous to all Societies of men as the ingaging in the other: Theſe, with many other conſiderations, ſatisfied me, not only in the Convenience, but, conſidering the preſent differences in the Kingdom, in the Neceſſity of yielding Obedience to the eſtabliſhed Orders of the Church, and I could never yet get leave of my ſelf to concur in Judgment with one, now at this time much admired and followed in the City, That the laying aſide the Ceremonies of the Church was a ſufficient compenſation for all that Bloud and Treaſure that had been ſpilt in the late unnatural and bloudy War; but wiſh with all my heart that they had continued till the general conflagration of the world, rather than ſuch a war ſhould have commenced; for I am certain that the neceſſary reſults and conſequences of the one are a thouſand times more prejudicial to the honour and reputation of the Proteſtant Cauſe, than the continuance of the other could have been, had they been as bad, nay many degrees worſe than our intereſted and zealous Adverſaries have made them: And we are able to anſwer all Arguments raiſed againſt a Croſs, or a Surplice, when we cannot without ſteeled Brows, and ſeared Conſciences vindicate and defend the late Rebellion. But in ſhort, this, in Mr. *Jenkins.*

in my apprehenſion (and I am ſure I am not prejudiced) is ſo baffled a Cauſe, that I wonder men of Parts and Learning are not aſhamed to offer at the Vindication of it: and I do verily believe thoſe men that now make themſelves the Heads of theſe dividing Parties, would not aſſume the confidence to fix ſuch odious Names upon the ſo well defended Ceremonies of the Church, and upon us for our peaceable and obedient uſing of them, did not they meet with ſo many ignorant and uninſtructed people, who are prepared, (upon the account of thoſe great pretences theſe men make to a more ſevere Holineſs than others,) to believe whatſoever they confidently bolt out, without a ſuitable evidence and proof; and who are pertinaciouſly reſolved to drive on their Secular Intereſt, by raiſing their own heights, upon the ſpoils and ruines of other mens Godlineſs and Reputation. And when things are looked in to the bottom, we ſhall find, that this is the Foundation of very much of our Nonconformity, which is now ſo bold and daring (for, God forbid I ſhould lay this Imputation at every mans door;) and if we once could arrive to that happineſs, as to make the Common People wiſe, and the Leaders of them in theſe forbidden Tracks ſilent, we ſhould quickly find Obedience to our Laws a more general thing, than, God knows, to the grief of all wiſe obſervers,

ſervers, now it is. And though I know this Opinion of mine is contradicted by many perſons (who upon other accounts do not want my juſt eſteem;) yet ſo long as the Common People are heedleſs as to the ſeveral Notions they ſuck in, and impoſed upon in no things ſooner, than thoſe which ought to be eſteemed of greateſt weight and moment, I mean the Matters of Religion, which have an immediate relation to the Intereſt and Happineſs of their Souls; ſo long as their Ignorance and more ſlender thoughts of things expoſe them to Pride and Self-conceitedneſs, to ſuch opinions of their own narrow and ſtraitned Conceptions as for want of more mature conſiderations of things, bear down all Arguments derived from the preſervation of Humane Societies, from the Dignity and Sacredneſs of Princes, founded in being God's Vicegerents here on Earth; ſo long as they cannot, by reaſon of the dulneſs and uninſtructedneſs of their Minds ſee into the ruines and deſolations that do infallibly attend all Diſobedience to Authority, but are apt to fancy a better ſtate of things, were they all managed by the preſent little Models they have either framed themſelves, or elſe by the ſilly ſuggeſtions ſome illiterate and yet pretended *Rabbi*, have lodged in their idle and unfurniſhed heads; why, ſo long I muſt crave any mans excuſe if I do not aſſent to thoſe mens Judgments,

ments, who with no ſmall degrees of confidence, and with great pretenſions to a more intimate acquaintance with State-Maxims, aſſert an Univerſal Toleration the only way to recover the Church, and to wrack Fanaticiſm and Sedition. And had the late Author of the Diſcourſe of Humane Reaſon left his Books a while, and walked about the Neighbouring Markets and made juſt Obſervations of the improvements of thoſe men who make up thoſe crouds and numbers there, I am apt to believe he would have conſidered better, before he had publiſhed a Book ſo deſtructive of all the Fundamental Notions of Government and Publick Communities; a Book wherein things of the greateſt Importance are left to thoſe, who by all the pains we can take with them, can be hardly brought to a right underſtanding of common ſenſe, and the moſt obvious and natural Duties of Religion. And thus having proved, and I hope to ſatisfaction, that the Church of *England* is wanting in nothing that refers to our Belief or Practice, and ſo conſequently to the gaining of Eternal Life, I will proceed to the next enquiry, to wit,

2. How it comes to paſs, that a Church thus furniſhed with all Advantages to Eternal Life, ſhould meet with ſuch Contempt and Diſregard? And here, upon enquiry, we ſhall find this principally proceeds theſe ways;

(1.) From profeſſed Enemies; (2.) From falſe Friends: both which very much hinder the Churches progreſs in the Hearts and Affections of its Members, and ſpoil its deſerved Reputation.

1. We will conſider the Churches profeſſed Enemies, and of them we ſhall find two ſorts of perſons pecking at her.

1. Some upon a Worldly and Secular account. 'Tis too well known, that in the late Combuſtions, many men warmed their fingers at thoſe fires they themſelves had kindled; and though ſplendid Pretences for Religion and Pure Worſhip were at the top, yet a ſordid aim at the Churches Patrimony and Revenue was at the bottom of their Deſigns; and no ſooner had ſucceſs crowned their unworthy undertakings, but they preſently fell to ſharing other mens Legal Portions, and Spiritual Allotments: And though they pretended a Spirit of Self-denial, on purpoſe to put the fairer gloſs upon their ungodly Quarrels, and to allure the Common and eaſily miſtaking People into their ſervice; yet we find, no ſooner did they apprehend themſelves out of danger, by the Fall and Ruine of the Royal Party, but preſently they forget the ſo much cried up Ordinance of Self-denyal, and fall a voting conſiderable ſhares of this Worlds Bleſſings to one another, and Church-Lands went at as eaſie a rate then, as they

they did at the great Alienation of them; and ſcarce a Man that had been active, either in City or in Countrey for their Cauſe, but he muſt have a feeling of thoſe Spoils and Booties. All which we know by an happy Reſtoration, in courſe returned to their true Proprietaries again. And can we think that thoſe who felt the ſweets of theſe enjoyments, have loſt their former Taſts and Reliſh? No, No, to fancy this, is to be guilty of too careleſs an Obſervation; for if they had, what makes them privately among themſelves to this day buy and ſell thoſe very Eſtates? which I think is no hard matter to make out. A thing which if but looked in to the bottom, would eaſily convince our Governours, what confidence ought to be repoſed in ſuch mens Pretences to Loyalty and Obedience, and withal the ſafe Condition their Eſtates and Liberties are in, while theſe men have a full liberty to make their Parties, and ſtrengthen their Intereſt in the affections of people of all ſorts and ranks whatſoever. Well, and how muſt theſe mens lingrings and deſires after theſe Eſtates be fulfilled? By what Methods can they hope to get into the Saddle, and ride upon the High places of the Earth again? Why, the only way is through the ruine and downfall of the Church; and how muſt this be accompliſhed? why, Slur it all the ways you can; call it a Limb of Antichriſt, an encourager of

of the Beaſt that aſcends out of the bottomleſs Pit, a ſupporter of Eccleſiaſtical Tyranny, and inſinuate into the common peoples minds, that ſhe ſtands betwixt them and their Goſpel-priviledges, and that there is as direct an oppoſition betwixt her and the Church God hath inſtituted, as there was betwixt *Dagon* and the Ark; with many other vile reflections of this Nature, and then you have half done your work. For theſe men know, let their pretences be what they will, that when the Church totters, the State hath a fellow feeling with it, that they live and die together; and therefore they itch after its Ruine, which they think they cannot better promote than by ſlandering of her, and when that is done, they fancy, as well they may, a quick poſſeſſion of thoſe fat Lands they ſo cheaply bought, and ſo deſervedly have loſt.

2. This excellent Frame and Conſtitution ſuffers from men, who are enemies, upon a pretence of Conſcience and Religion. And here I might bring you a Catalogue of various Sects and Parties of men, who, though they cannot agree amongſt themſelves, when they come to divide the Churches ſpoil, yet all combine together to make the Church it ſelf their ſpoil; and in purſuit of this, by what Names do they deſcribe this excellent Church in their Prayers and Preachments, but by the Whore of *Babylon*, the

the Cruel Dragon, that pours out flouds of poyſonous water upon the Woman, the Slayer of the Witneſſes, with many other of this Nature? And her pious Prayers muſt be ſcorned under the Notion of dull and formal things, fit for dark Times, and for none to uſe but ſuch, as underſtand not the impreſſions of Gods good Spirit. And her Reverend Prelates, inſtead of the ancient and Primitive Appellation of Fathers, muſt be branded with the Name of Step-Fathers; inſtead of Pillars, Caterpillars, whoſe Houſes are haunted, and their Epiſcopal Chairs poyſoned by the Spirit that bears rule in the Air. And for her Ceremonies, they forſooth, muſt be reported to be kept on foot on purpoſe, to ſymbolize with, and ſhow our affections to the Church of *Rome*; and this muſt be ſaid with a great deal of confidence, notwithſtanding the men that ſuggeſt it, know and are convinced at the ſame time, that no men of any Profeſſion whatever, have thruſt ſharper Darts into the ſides of that pretended Catholick Mother than the Sons of the Church have done. And though I know this looks very diſingenuouſly, and I think I had not wronged my Charity if I had ſaid Diſhoneſtly; yet nothing is more common amongſt men who ſtudy the Intereſt of a Party, and are reſolved to fix themſelves if poſſible, in the Chair of Authority and Government. The

moſt uſeful Vertues muſt be made Vices, and Worthy Actions that ſerve the Publick and argue a true Generoſity of Mind in him that does them, yet muſt be miſconſtrued, and the Principles of the Actions cenſured, and ſome Circumſtance or other thruſt into them, whereby the Credit of them may be blaſted.

Thus when Archbiſhop *Laud* took care for preventing the ſubverſion of the Church of *England*, by the ſpreading of the Socinian Hereſies, in ſuppreſſing books of that nature, Mr. *Burton* charges it as one of his Crimes upon him, reproaching him for ſuppreſſing thoſe Books for no other Reaſon, but becauſe they magnified the Authority of the Holy Scriptures. A Cenſure as full of Spight and evil Nature as moſt I have met withal.

But thus it is, and, as far as I can ſee into Affairs and Tempers, will be ſo long as ſome Deſigns are on foot and ſome ſorts of Spirits are permitted.

Let us ſay what we will, and enter into all manner of ſerious Proteſtations that we are no Papiſts, neither aim at the Introduction of Popery in the leaſt; Let the Members of our Church write with never ſo much ſtrength and weight againſt the Innovations of that Church; nay, let the Life of our Church be begun in the Death of many Worthies, for their reſolved and ſtedfaſt Oppoſition to that Church:

why, yet that we are Papiſts, or elſe inclinable thereunto being a pretty way to convey Prejudices into the Common People againſt us, and to draw off their Affections to our Perſons, that thereby they may the more eaſily be allured from our Doctrine and Publick Adminiſtrations; why, to this good End, and that the Glory of God may be magnified, and the Power of his pure Ordinances demonſtrated, in the deſtruction of the Sons of *Babylon*, we muſt be Papiſts, and we muſt drink of the ſame Cup of Fornication that Mother of Harlots does: and when we write againſt her, 'tis but a Copy of our countenances, for in our hearts we are for *Rome*.

And after all this can any man wonder, that a Church ſo batter'd at by Perſons profeſſing more than ordinary Sanctity and Holineſs, and expreſſing that Holineſs by ſo many formal and taking ways, by all that their Hands and Tongues, their Faces and Geſtures are capable of; that a Church thus miſrepreſented and withal to perſons of weak Judgments, and yet ſtrong conceits, as God knows moſt of the common people are; can we, I ſay, wonder that a Church ſurrounded and ſtormed by ſuch Enemies as theſe, lives not in its ancient Splendour, in its juſt and due Eſteem? And what will be the end of permitting all this? (though I muſt confeſs I have many ſad Reflections about it)

it) why, that I leave to the Magiſtrates of the Kingdom, who have great Eſtates to preſerve, and ancient Families to ſupport and continue, to conſider of.

And thus having ſhown you the Damages this Church ſuſtains by open Enemies, we will now proceed to and take notice of the Injuries ſhe ſuffers from falſe Friends: And here alſo we find Two Sorts of Perſons whom ſhe hath no reaſon to be proud of. (1.) Some whom we will conſider as Perſons in their Political Capacity, as Members of the Civil Body; and Two ways the Church ſuffers by them: 1. By their viciousLives and Converſations; eſpecially if the men who lead theſe Lives be men of Power and Authority. It is obſerved that among the Common People, things, though never ſo excellent in themſelves, though never ſo conducive to advantageous purpoſes, yet they loſe their eſteem, when men of profligate Lives have the Manage of them. And though I hate to aſſault my Betters with any rudeneſs, and both my Function and Education oblige me to Decency both in my words and carriage; yet give me leave to be a little plain with you that are our Countrey Patriots, and to entreat you all who by the good liking of our great Lord the King ſit in higher Places than others, to vindicate the Honour of our Church, to recommend it to the choice and love of all

within your Neighbourhood, by your ſober Lives, and worthy Converſations. It was an excellent Saying of an Honourable Perſon, ſome years ago; who, when lying upon his death-bed, did thus expreſs himſelf; That he had looked into all Forms and conſidered all Models of Diſcipline and Governmens, and found none ſo agreeable both to the Apoſtolical Example and Primitive Practice as the Diſcipline and Government of the Church of *England*; and that he found but one unanſwerable Argument againſt it, and that was the Lives of too many who profeſs an outward kindneſs to it. Oh did our Magiſtrates comport themſelves according to the Rules of the Holy Goſpel, did they countenance Godlineſs and Sobriety, and puniſh all thoſe notorious Impieties, which are ſo obvious to the Common People, and which, where only the Laws of Nature have their Influence, come under cenſure; did they in their ſeveral Publick Meetings carry themſelves with that Gravity which becomes their Places, and which indeed their places (if they would keep up the neceſſary Reputation of them) call for at their hands: Further, did they encourage the Publick Preachers by their conſtant Attendance, and a Deportment, whileſt they are there, ſignificative of that Veneration they have for the Ordinance; did they all in general lay reſtraints upon

upon themſelves, and afterwards puniſh others for their uſual and yet horrid Oaths and Curſes; were their Houſes Schools of Diſcipline and good order; did they ſpeak of Religion as perſons having a ſenſe of it upon their Minds, and as perſons abhorring the new odious way of drolling upon it; Oh! methinks then I ſee Faction and Sedition dread the Common Streets and Publick Houſes, and with ſhame creeping into holes and corners: methinks I ſee this Church ſo fitted to all the Purpoſes of Religion, lifting up its head above the Waters, and no more heard complaining of her coarſe and homely uſage from thoſe Children that were brought up under her Wings and Government. And that this may prevail with the Gentry of the Kingdom to leave off any courſe of Life, whereby this Church is prejudiced, I will end this Head with this bold Aſſertion; That ſo far as they have any hand, either by their vitious Examples, or any other way, to the pulling down of this Church; ſo far they lend their aſſiſtance to the ruine of their Poſterity; eſpecially if their children prove but honeſt, and conſcientiouſly obedient to the eſtabliſhed Laws. And if any man will offer to gainſay me in this Particular, I will only refer him to the account of the Compoſitions and Sequeſtrations which the Loyal Gentry of the Kingdom were forced to ſubmit unto, and the irrecove-

rable Entanglements of their Eſtates thereby, after the ſinking of the Royal Cauſe by the late Wars: and if that will not convince him, I will trouble my ſelf with no other Methods of ſatisfaction, but leave him as a Perſon pertinaciouſly reſolved againſt the cleareſt Evidence.

2. Theſe men that are entruſted with Places of Authority are falſe Friends to the Church, by neglecting the juſt Execution of thoſe Laws that by the Wiſdom of the Nation are framed on purpoſe to keep up the Honour and preſerve the Safety of the Church. For if there was a Reaſon for enacting thoſe Laws, and they were deſigned to fence the Church and to keep it from the rude aſſaults of every pragmatical and conceited Perſon, who will be pleaſed with nothing but what is ſhaped and faſhioned according to ſome raw Fancy of his own; why, then I think they ought not to be laid aſide, as Almanacks out of Date.

And if there be no ſuch thing as a Reaſon for them, why then, in Gods Name, let them be repealed; though I think 'tis a ſign of a very bold and buſie Spirit to declare them ſo, before the wiſe Sages, who upon great advice did make them, adjudge them ſo, and ſignifie their Opinion to us by as ſolemn and plain a Declaration as the Act it ſelf was by which theſe things were commanded. For if Laws and Con-

Conſtitutions, which were made for the Good of the Body Politick, muſt ſubmit to every private Man's ſhallow Underſtanding, and the Obligation of them ceaſe or take place according to their Opinion of them, Government will quickly loſe its force, and Princes will be in a worſe Condition, and have leſs Authority than Maſters of the ſmalleſt Families. And from diſputes and Queſtions about the Rights of Princes, in ordering Church affairs, they will proceed to judge of thoſe Laws, that are made either for the Preſervation of their Perſons, or ſupplying their neceſſary Charges with Revenues ſuitable to that ſtate ſuch a Truſt does call for. And though that the Execution of theſe Laws ſeems very grievous and full of cruelty to many men, eſpecially to thoſe who are ſettled in their Commands over the Separating Bands; yet when I conſider, that either it muſt be ſo, (provided the Laws continue as they are) or elſe that a whole order and Body of men muſt be deſtroyed, and brought under the Power of thoſe, whoſe Mercies we know by ſad experience are Cruelties, and who by a miſguided Zeal, fancy they do God good ſervice, in ſtripping us of all the Laws give us a Right unto. I would appeal to any man, whether the whole ſhould ſuffer, out of a womaniſh pity to a few, and ſolid Conſtitutions truckle to groundleſs Paſſions

and reſolute diſcontents? I am ſure, according to thoſe Obſervations I have made, I have always found that wiſe Governours in all Ages have made private Conveniencies or Advantages, ſubmit and lye proſtrate before a publick good: And accordingly we find, the Late King, that incomparable Perſon, in his Letter of Advice to his preſent Majeſty, gives his ſenſe of this, in theſe words; That he could not yet learn that Leſſon, nor he hoped ever would his Son, *That it is ſafe for a King to gratifie any Faction with the perturbation of the Laws, in which is wrapt up the publick Intereſt and the Good of the Community.* And therefore it being ſo, I would deſire the Subordinate Magiſtrates of the Kingdom, (for to theſe only I make this Addreſs) with whom his Majeſty hath entruſted the Execution of his Laws, to conſider whether they do not give away the Safety, as well as the Reputation of the Church, by ſuffering men before their doors, as it were, openly and with all the ſeeming Circumſtances of a defying Confidence, to break the Laws and violate theſe ſacred Conſtitutions. And though I know what ſome men put in by way of anſwer to all this, yet when men can find out a Plea for Perjury, I will return upon them, and not till then; only I dare aſſure them that it would be better for ſuch men to decline the Publick Service, than

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to take an Oath to do it, and yet neglect it: And though I have ſaid more now upon this Head, than I know many will con me thanks for, yet let me conclude with this Proteſtation; That I have not argued this out of any deſire of other mens ſuffering, either in their Liberties or Eſtates; for I thank God, my Natural Temper, as well as my Religion, obliges me to greater Moderation; and it is not particular men I adviſe this againſt, but mad Factions and embodyed Numbers, whoſe Principles ſtand in a direct oppoſition to the preſent Settlement of the Church; and the grand Reaſon, why I conceive Laws ought to be executed, is from a full ſatisfaction I have, That no Kingdom can live in Peace and Honour, where ſolemn Acts, made for the regulating mens Lives, and reſtraining their violent paſſions, give way to private and more particular Intereſts. And if all our ſeveral Adverſaries would not ſay the ſame, were any of the Governments and Diſciplines they are ſo fond of, as well eſtabliſhed as ours is, I will be their Bonds-man. And therefore I hope no man will impeach me upon this account, of a bitter and perſecuting Spirit.

2. As this our Church loſes its Reputation and Eſteem, by falſe Friends, conſider'd in a Civil and Political ſence; ſo it loſes very much, and I wiſh there were no cauſe to ſay it, by

by falſe Friends, conſidered as perſons dedicated to an Holy Office, and ſworn to do her faithful ſervice; the Idleneſs of ſome, and the Vicioufneſs of others, who wear the outward Robes of Innocency, have opened as many, nay more mouths againſt our Church, than any thing elſe I know. Had not our Enemies ſtood upon this place of defence, and made it their chiefeſt Sanctuary, we had muzzled Faction long ago, and ſeditious principles had been quite beat out of Countenance; we had chaſed Separation into its proper Den, and ſent it back to inhabit thoſe lower Regions, where it was firſt invented. For when all Arguments have failed our Adverſaries, and we have ſilenced all their unreaſonable Clamours, why yet an Arrow fetched out of this Quiver hath ſhot us through and through; and we muſt never hope to ſee the Church aſcendant, till we recollect our ſelves, and return, in ſome good degree, to the Innocence of Primitive Chriſtianity. Let but Gravity and Prudence attend us in the Streets, and in our ordinary Converſe; let but Diligence, and a well-proportioned Zeal await us in the Desk and Pulpit; let us fight our Enemies with their own weapons, and be as often preaching Conformity and Obedience to wholſome Laws, as they are ſtirring up their hearers to diſſatisfactions and diſcontents; and then I am ſure we ſhall not need

need many more Laws to reduce the Generality of the people to a Submiſſion. I will not meddle with the Right or the Religion of Preaching often; yet this I will dare to ſay, Conſidering our preſent Circumſtances 'tis very politick and would prevent much of that Faction, which otherways will neceſſarily grow and enlarge it ſelf. And upon this account I would heartily deſire thoſe men, who are not ſatisfyed in the publick Convenience of it themſelves, not to laugh at and deride thoſe who do it; for I am certain this hath contributed to the Churches loſs, and hath put an Argument into our Adverſaries hands, that hath not wanted its force and power amongſt the giddy multitude. Well therefore, if we have any deſire to ſee the Proſperity of this Church; if we have any hearty good wiſhes for the unalterable Settlement of it, pray let us be diligent in our Calling; for Diligence makes the Church rich both in Members and in Graces too. Let us not grudge any pains, whereby we may draw people into that Fold Chriſt himſelf does keep, and bring them into thoſe direct ways and paths that lead to Eternal Life.

But there is another falſe Friend amongſt the Clergy too, and that is he that inveighs privately againſt what publickly he hath ſworn to, and in his Viſits ſighs and mourns for thoſe Impoſitions,

poſitions which under his own hand, he hath declared his full ſatisfaction in. This is the Man indeed that nurſes Faction, and ſtrengthens the Common People in the belief of their wrong and ungrounded perſwaſions of the Diſcipline of the Church; and truly is fit for nothing elſe but to be given up to the utmoſt Juſtice and Rigour of the Law, and to be dealt withal as a perjured perſon; for what hold can be taken of ſuch a perſon, and what ſecurity can he give of his good Behaviour, whom Oaths and voluntary Subſcriptions will not oblige and tye? This Man ought to be looked upon as an Enemy in our own Quarters, ſtanding ready upon every Siege, to open the Gates and to break down the Walls in order to the entrance of our Enemies upon us; and if ſuch Fellows as theſe be not taught better Manners and more Honeſty, why, we muſt expect a return of our former Confuſions upon us again. For here it was they begun before, and moſt of thoſe that curſed *Meroz*, and invited the Common People to help the Lord againſt the Mighty, were perſons whoſe ſeveral Hands, to the Doctrine and Diſcipline of the Church, might have been found, in thoſe ſeveral Biſhops Offices, from whom they received thoſe Inſtruments whereby they were empowered to exerciſe their Publick Miniſtery. And alas! that which ſhows there is much of

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the ſame Spirit amongſt theſe men ſtill, and that the Intereſt of Morality and Honeſty muſt be waved, when their Game is to be plaid, is this, that there is ſcarce any man in Publick and Legal Employment, can have a good word, or be repreſented under any fair character by the Brethren of the Separation, but ſuch falſe Loones as theſe are: theſe muſt be cryed up as having ſomething of the Power of Godlineſs; (for to allow as much as themſelves pretend to, would ſpoil the market;) theſe muſt be vogued by them as men having ſome tolerable acquaintance with the gracious Influences of God's Spirit, and as men whoſe Hearts are good, let their outward Practices be what they will: and if advice be asked, what publick Miniſters are fitteſt to be heard? why, if they will allow it Lawful to hear any (for, I promiſe you, at this time, as the price of things go, it is a very great favour) be ſure they be ſent to theſe mens Churches. But, Good God! that men ſhould be ſo notoriouſly wicked on both ſides; the one to entertain a good opinion of and look upon the other as a Saint purely for his Knavery and Diſhoneſty; and the other that he ſhould believe himſelf the better Chriſtian, becauſe he plays tricks with Government, and ſolemnly ſwears to that, which privately he complains of as his greateſt burthen, and makes ridiculous reflections upon:

upon: certainly if any thing be an Argument of a waſted Mind and ſpoiled Conſcience, it is this.

And thus having given an account of thoſe main Engines whereby the Honour and Safety of this excellent Church is battered down, I thought to have conſulted the Readers as well as mine own eaſe, and to have gone no further. But upon freſh and ſecond thoughts, I find other things whereby our Church ſuffers an Eclipſe, which though not ſo obvious to every view as the others, yet I am certain very pernicious, and in their way very much conducing to the Churches Ruine, and to the encreaſing of thoſe thick Clouds, that are now ſo faſt gathering about us; and which, if not laid aſide by thoſe who have hitherto been the evil Inſtruments to make uſe of them, will in time lay waſte this Garden, though never ſo well encloſed: Give me leave to name them.

Firſt, This Church ſuffers by mens miſconſtruing of Judgments and making every Calamity and Deſolation that befalls the Kingdom, to be the Effect of Gods anger for the Churches encroachments upon the Rights of Chriſt, whoſe Scepter they would perſwade the World is by us taken out of his hands, and given to the Civil Magiſtrate, who hath no ſhare nor portion in it. And this is a mighty prevailing

prevailing thing amongſt the Vulgar, whoſe ſenſe of Secular loſſes, ſuch as they have a preſent feeling of, is very great, and muſt needs influence them accordingly. What can provoke ſuch people more than a perſwaſion, that upon ſuch and ſuch accounts their endeared Children are ſwept away by a ſpreading and contagious Plague; or that the Scarcity of Corn which is their every day neceſſary Food, proceeds from Gods diſpleaſure againſt Biſhops and other Clergy-men, for keeping Chriſt out of his Government and Kingdome; and that thoſe ſeveral Fires which tear down their Houſes, and give ſo great affrightments, are purely kindled upon the ſcore that Gods people (by whom they mean themſelves) are puniſhed, for not yielding to Romiſh and Superſtitious Impoſitions? Certainly ſuch ſuggeſtions as theſe, to people who are hugely governed by Senſe, and take their meaſures of things by Succeſs and Proſperity, muſt needs ſtir up all the Paſſions that are within them, and confirm in them the greateſt prejudice and diſpleaſure againſt a Government from which ſo much evil hath been derived, both to mens *Perſons* and Eſtates. And further, their impatient longing after a full enjoyment of all thoſe things that contribute to their worldly Happineſs, muſt needs put them upon all violent means to throw down that Intereſt, which deſtroyes ſo much

much at preſent, and ſet up the other whereby they are invited to believe all happineſs and outward welfare would attend them; eſpecially if you do but add to thoſe things a Deſcription of a glorious State of ſpiritual things, wherein they ſhall have a ſhare of Government, and not be at this rate always under Guardianſhip and Subjection, ridden by Prieſts and other Antichriſtian Officers: Oh! ſuch an Expectation makes their Bloud boyl within them, and to promote theſe excellent things they care not what wrong they do either to Church-mens Reputation or Revenues, nor what Method they make uſe of to weaken the Forces of ſuch a Babyloniſh Crew, who would ſtand betwixt them and the ſplendid Manifeſtation of Chriſt's Power and Kingdom. And if any man object and ſay, I am uncharitable in fixing ſuch an Imputation upon the Adverſaries of the Church, I anſwer again, 'tis no breach of charity to charge men with Truth, and to let the World know, by what baſe and ſiniſter means they leſſen the deſerved Honour of our Church, nay, 'tis a piece of Charity and Juſtice to our ſelves. And that I have not charged them falſely I refer any man to thoſe Interpretations they made of the laſt great Plague and never-to-be-forgotten Fire, in which though many of theſe men wanted not their ſhare, as to loſs and damage, yet Good men!

ſuch

ſuch was their Innocency, they had no hand in the provocation: though one would have thought, had the Fire been purely to vindicate their cauſe, the Angel of the Lord ſhould have marked their Houſes, as he did the Iſraelites in *Egypt*, and commanded thoſe furious Flames to have paſſed them over, and ſpent their rage upon theirs alone, who were profeſſed Sons of the Church of *England*. And let them ſay what they pleaſe by way of excuſe for themſelves, yet this is their courſe ſtill; and though Judgments are ſent as tokens of Divine diſpleaſure againſt all thoſe breaches of Gods righteous Laws, all thoſe open and bold-faced Impieties, all thoſe Enormities that are uſual amongſt any Party or Diviſion of Men whatſoever, though we all come ſhort of the Glory of God, and every man from the higheſt to the loweſt, by ſome miſcarriage or other helps to kindle the fire in the Divine Breaſt, yet this Church of *England*, this cruel Step-mother, who tears out of Gods Childrens hands the pure Bread that falls down from Heaven, and would put them off with empty Husks; theſe proud and domineering Clergymen who live in eaſe and idleneſs, why, for the ſake of theſe does God ſuffer the Air to be infected, the Earth to be dry and barren, and the Heavens to be as Braſs over our heads. Oh! were but Antichriſt once deſtroyed, and

all the appendant Limbs thereof, and Chriſts own Ordinances and pure Inſtitutions ſet up in the World, what a new face of things would be preſently! then would our Floors be full of wheat, and our Fats ſhould overflow with Wine and Oil; then the Saints ſhould meet with joy, and ſing their ſongs upon *Sigionoth*; yea, then would Gods people execute *vengeance upon the Heathen and puniſhment upon the People*, and *bind their Kings in chains, and their Nobles in fetters of iron.* And oh, how does this good news tickle the vulgar ſort of people, and how pleaſed are they in their fanciful Reflections upon what brave Times will be, and what brave things they will do, when they come to have a ſhare in the Powers of the Earth, and put hooks into the Noſtrils of the great *Leviathans*, the Temporal and the Spiritual Tyrants, that have eaten up Gods people, as they eat Bread! And that theſe good things may be accompliſhed, and they may leave the bleſſing of them to their Poſterity; why, good men, many of them care not by what Spoils and Rapines, by what Untruths and Falſehoods they ſlurr the Credit, and ruine the Reputation of ſuch a Church, as is the great bar to theſe happy Enjoyments. And becauſe this is ſo common a thing among all Sectaries whatever, and they have ſo partial a kindneſs for themſelves, as to ſweep their own doors, and lay the loads upon other

other mens ſhoulders; give me leave to make an uſeful Digreſſion, and ſhow the Vanity and Irreligion of ſuch doings, by propoſing to theſe men a few Queſtions.

1. Whether they do not, by particularizing the Reaſon of Gods Judgments, pretend to a Knowledge, which they cannot, according to Gods ordinary Method of proceeding with the World, at this time attain unto? For that Miracles, ſince the Settlement of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation in thoſe places where its Profeſſion is become National are ceaſed, I think is paſſed all doubt; and that God now deals with mens Reaſon and Underſtanding, and offers them the Evidence of former Miracles in conjunction with other Arguments in order to their Conviction of the Truth of what he hath delivered, is paſt all ſcruple: and further, that no Man that pretends to have a further Revelation than what is made in Scripture, is to be believed, unleſs either I have a Revelation ſignifying that his Revelation is true, or elſe he bring his Letters credential along with him, and by Workings above the power of Nature, ſuch as Chriſt, and his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors for ſome continuance of time had, prove his Miſſion, I think is beyond all controverſie. So that then theſe men, who, that they may the better heat the Common People againſt us, pretend themſelves Gods Familiars, and privy

Counſellors, and by vertue of their Intimacy with him boldly lay Judgments at the doors of other men, by what way ſhall we know they are right in their Interpretation, and that God grew very angry with this Nation, as ſoon as Epiſcopacy was reſtored, and the Lands of the Church returned into the poſſeſſion of the right owners again; and that the Plague and the Fire were ſent purely to vindicate their cauſe, and to expreſs Gods indignation againſt that cruel and hard uſage they met withal? Can they ſatisfie us in the truth of this by Raiſing the Dead, or elſe ſpeaking thoſe, as St. *Peter* did, who this moment are in a compleat ſtate of Health, into death immediately: (God forbid they ſhould be inveſted with ſuch a power, for I believe we ſhould have but very few Biſhops left alive amongſt us then.) Can they alter the Courſe of Nature, and change the eſſential Property of any thing, and do great cures even by oppoſite and contrary Means, as our Saviour did? No, alas! when we make a juſt enquiry into their abilities, we find the men, maugre all their boaſtings, are but like unto us, and all this confidence in particularizing the Grounds and Reaſons of Gods Judgments, is founded in pride and Self-conceit in an overweening value they have for themſelves, and an implacable hatred they have entertained againſt the Church of *England*. And though

though the Principles of Separation have been the Inſtruments of as dreadful Effects to this Nation, and wrought as great Confuſions as Hiſtory almoſt can parallel; yet ſo vain are many of theſe Men, that there cannnot be a Storm or a Tempeſt, that there cannot happen the leaſt Ruffle or Diſorder upon Nature, but preſently it is to give intimation of the wrongs and oppreſſions they are under, and to warn both the King and Biſhops to treat them more gently for the time to come. And by this means the eaſy people are emboldened to very vile thoughts of the Government, and to any miſchievous undertaking that tends to its Ruine; for who would not willingly be ridd of a Conſtitution or of a Number of ſuch Men as are ſo great eye-ſores to God himſelf, that the very ſight of them is continually provoking him to work great Deſolations in the earth?

2. I ask theſe men, whether we, as obedient Churchmen, have not as much right to make uſe of this Argument againſt them, as they againſt us? truly I think it will be no eaſy matter to diſprove it. Nay conſidering that earthly Government is a dim and obſcure Repreſentation of that excellent Order and Harmony that is in Heaven, and that Magiſtrates are Gods Vicegerents and his immediate Stewards on Earth, I think that thoſe who live

in Obedience to them, upon a ſatisfaction th things they command are not unlawful, may pretend to as great, nay greater kindneſs from God than theſe men can do, and conſequently be better enabled by him to expound Judgments than they are. And now upon this account ſuppoſe we ſhould tell them, that the Plague and the Fire was for the murdering one King and Baniſhing the other; was for laying violent hands upon the Ancient and Primitive Order of Epiſcopacy, and turning the Aged and Reverend Prelates out of their Eſtates as well as Liberties: ſuppoſe further, we ſhould tell them, that the continuance of Gods anger is for their adherence ſtill to thoſe Principles, notwithſtanding we have in theſe late years ſeen iſſue from them, ſuch horrid Diſtractions and Animoſities, ſuch unnatural Quarrels betwixt Neighbours and Neighbours, nay betwixt ſome Parents and Children; I ſay, ſuppoſe we ſhould tell them this and much more, why, would they not pronounce us monſtrouſly uncharitable and preſuming upon a greater information from Heaven, than we have any warrant to do from Scripture? but why the Pride and Uncharitableneſs ſhould lye altogether on our ſide, I profeſs, I cannot tell, unleſs they can demonſtrate their Right, as I ſaid before, to comment upon all the viſible Expreſſions of Gods Anger, by working ſome unqueſtionable Miracles before our Eyes.

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3. I ask theſe great pretended Acquaintances of Heaven whether it be not a Sign of great Hypocriſie and unſoundneſs of Mind, to prevent and hinder the influence of any Argument or Conſideration, whereby God deſigns to lay mens Pride in the duſt, and to work them into that ſtate of Humiliation and Self-abaſement, which becomes all men in this frail and imperfect State? For certainly 'tis the proper character of a good and an honeſt Chriſtian, who takes up his Religion upon Goſpel-Motives, that he is one that will make uſe of all Ways and Methods, to work his mind up to ſuch a Temper as God requires from him, and therefore this good Man if at any time God ſuffer great ruines to overtake the World, why, he knows, he cannot better and more ſuitably comport himſelf, than by being humbled under his Anger, than by reflecting upon himſelf with that ſeverity of mind, that becomes any man, who hath had an hand in ſuch provocations; but now for a Man or a Body of Men to impute theſe Judgments to others and to ſhift them from themſelves, it is to abate the force of that Argument, that may be fetched from Gods preſent heavy Diſpenſations, and as perſons unconcerned, to leave all thoſe ways of Humiliation, preſcribed in Scripture, to be undertaken and done by others; for as for themſelves they can waſh their hands, they

are pure and clean, than which there cannot be a greater inſtance of Pride and Vanity of an unſound and a very corrupted Mind. And therefore if by theſe Queſtions I can but bring theſe great opiniators to a perſwaſion, that Gods Judgments are ſent forth to puniſh and terrifie men of all Opinions and Judgments whatſoever from a ſinful courſe of Life, and that when he appears with his Sword in his hand, every man ought to ſmite upon his Breaſt, and ſay, What have I done? I think I ſhall do both Religion, and themſelves a very great Right.

2. This Church ſuffers very much by the Jealouſie of many of the Gentry (eſpecially thoſe who have ſwallowed down the Principles of Mr. *Hobbs*) leſt the Clergy ſhould overtop them, or at leaſt encroach too much upon their Power, and influence in thoſe Countreys where they live. Many of them, I ſay, for God forbid I ſhould impeach all or moſt of them; for certainly there is no ſpot of Ground in the Chriſtian world where there are better bred Gentlemen, than in this famous Iſland, who underſtand reſpect and kindneſs to all ſorts of Perſons, in proportion to thoſe ſeveral places and conditions they are fixed in, and who have a particular eſteem for the Clergy, both upon the ſcore of the Dignity of their Function, and their juſt opinion of thoſe Degrees the Uni-

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verſity for a compenſation of thoſe improvements they have made in ſeveral Arts and Sciences have deſervedly conferred upon them. And I muſt needs ſay this further, that I have met with very few Branches of the Ancient Gentry, upon whom Civility and Modeſty have been entailed from many preceeding Generations, or in my preſent Neighbourhood, that have not been very punctualand zealous in keeping up the Reputation of the Miniſtery, both by their own perſonal carriage to them, and their readineſs to ſecure them from the aſſaults and rudeneſs of the untutored Rabble.

But however we cannot expect but in great flocks there ſhould be ſome diſeaſed Sheep, and even amongſt thoſe who either have, or ought to have had better Education, we muſt expect to meet with ſome, who want that Civility and Obligingneſs of Behaviour, that would very well become their great Revenues, and put a gloſs upon their Titles of Honour. And uſually the frothy Wit and impertinent Humours of theſe men are ſpent upon thoſe, who by vertue of their Commiſſion, are the Embaſſadors of God, and out of fear leſt they ſhould ſhare with theſe Mighty Huffs in Command and Intereſt among the common people, why, all ways muſt be taken to inſinuate little opinions of them into the Minds of the Credulous Vulgar. And to this

good

good end now and then they muſt be invited to this Great Mans Table, and be called at every turn by ſome name or other, that ſhall make them cheap in the eyes of Vulgar people, who commonly take their meaſures of things from the Practice and Example of their Landlords: and that their dependance may be the faſter, if their Maintenance be but ſmall, all ways muſt be ſtopt, through which they endeavour to obtain a legal and certain enjoyment of a more comfortable and ſuitable Livelihood: for whilſt their Lives are precarious, oh they can put them to the frequent uſe of their knees, which otherways would grow too ſtiff; they can keep them at a diſtance, and make them know what ſubjection means. Alas! if they come to make their claims by the Countenance of Laws, they will be too proud and ſaucy, unmannerly and rude, and it may be aſſume an unaccuſtomed confidence to reprove theſe braving Hectors with too ſmart and ſevere an Emphaſis. Then they will it may be too boldly ſtand their grounnd, when they are ſcornfully reprehended, for their ill drawn Doctrines, or their ill derived inferences; for their buſie interrupting his Worſhip when he had compoſed himſelf to a ſoft and eaſie ſlumber: and though in ancient times Emperours and other great men ſubmitted conſcientiouſly in many

things to the Power of Spiritual Guides, and took their Correction as well as Advice and Counſel with all chearfulneſs, yet now, forſooth,'tis below a Gentleman to have his frolicks damped by the pragmatical interpoſal of a buſie Prieſt; this is a piece of ſlavery to which their Heroick Spirits ſcorn to ſubmit. And therefore to prevent this Inconvenience, all means muſt be uſed to daunt the Spirits of theſe Worthy perſons who are Gods Meſſengers, and to make them more modeſt in their addreſſes to their Greatneſſes for the time to come; and if by an idle and contemptible Name, or a ſcandalous Report they can render theſe men cheap and little in the Hearts and Eyes of their Neighbourhood, they fancy a very great victory and conqueſt.

But how unworthy a thing this is, as it is a contempt brought upon men, whoſe Learning and Education commands from all ingenuous Minds eſteem and value, and how pernicious it is in its conſequence I leave any man to judge, who underſtands the neceſſity of a ſeparated Order of Men, to inſtruct all ſorts of people, and thereby teach them the principles of Obedience, firſt to God and then to Men, according to their ſeveral places in the World, an Order of men without whoſe Influence and repeated Counſels, I am certain the World would be little better than a Wilderneſs fill'd

with

with Inhabitants of no better Natures, nor under any better Diſcipline than ſavage Beaſts are; whoſe great employment is to run up and down and rend and devour one another. And I would therefore have this great Swaggerer againſt the Clergy to conſider, that without ſuch an Order of Men, his very Eſtate would be the parent of his Danger, and his beſt title to it, would be the length of his Sword and the Number of his Servants; for 'tis our buſineſs to teach men upon Principles of Conſcience, to keep themſelves within their ſtated bounds, and to be content with any Condition the Providence of God ſhall allot for them. And if you do but lay aſide the Prieſthood, and ſuffer the people to receive no better Notices of things than what they get from theſe Great Mens Examples, or the Documents of their ignorant Neighbours, I will warrant you, Men, though capable of better things, will be like Beaſts of prey, and the ſeveral Orders of men muſt ſubmit to the fury of the ſtrongeſt Party, and the greatneſs of their Eſtates will expoſe them to the greater Envye and the cloſer conſpiracy of other ambitious perſons to betray and work them into ruine. And this was wiſely foreſeen by ſeveral wiſe men in the late confuſions; and therefore when the freakiſh Sectaries ſtarted any thing of this Nature in their pretended Parliaments, and offered at a Vote againſt

againſt the publick Miniſtery, as ſometimes they did, why, theſe men ſtept in and with all their might and ſtrength oppoſed it, and with this Argument chiefly, that without the Conduct and Guidance of ſuch an Order of Men, it was impoſſible to keep the Nation in any tolerable peace and quietneſs. And therefore I dare be bold to acquaint theſe deſpiſers of the Clergy, that 'tis not only their praiſe to give reſpect and honour to Perſons, whoſe Functions and Education challenge it, and who have received it from all wiſe and good Men, time out of mind; but that it is their ſafety and ſecurity, and that the preſervation of their Eſtates in their Families and Succeſſors does much depend upon it. For without Principles of Conſcience, which we know are chiefly derived into the Minds of people, by the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and the ſooner according to the ſtrength of their Reputation amongſt the people, I ſay without Principles of Conſcience men can have no other ſecurity of their Poſſeſſions, than what they enjoy by outward force and ſtrength: and therefore if theſe men will not eſteem us for the ſake of our Improvements in Learning, for the ſake of thoſe Degrees the Univerſities have conferred upon us, and which by the Laws of Heraldry, puts us into the Rank and Number of Gentlemen; nor for the ſake of our holy Office, whereby we are dedi-

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cated to the Service of the Great King of Kings, yet I hope the preſervation of their Lands and Revenues will have ſome influence upon them, and oblige them, if not from Principles of Conſcience, yet from Principles of policy, to treat us becoming our Profeſſion, and not deal with us as the Refuſe and Scum of the Countrey, as ſome idle atheiſtical, Gentlemen ſhall I call them? no Bruits, have done of late.

3. This Church ſuffers very much by erecting Schools for Academick ſtudies as they now call them, and thereby infuſing Principles of diſlike againſt the Government into the Youth of the Kingdom. I need not tell the World what a piece of boldneſs this is, and what an unſuitable return it is to his Majeſty for his kindneſs and condeſcenſion to theſe men; who inſtead of making a modeſt uſe of his Goodneſs, are forming Factions againſt him, and inſtructing Youth in Principles of a quite different Nature, from the Laws and ſettled conſtitutions of the Kingdom, are preparing their Poſterity to ſtand it out againſt their future Governours, as they themſelves have done againſt his preſent Majeſty and his Father, and by this means are entailing miſeries and confuſions upon the Nation. Alas! at this rate the Church of *England* will never want its Enemies, and a Generation of Vipers will be at hand upon all occaſi-

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ons to ſting her if poſſible to death; and if this be ſuffered, and our Governours lie aſleep whileſt the Enemy thus ſowes Tares, why, then the Lord have mercy upon us, we cannot ſooner or later eſcape a ruine, and 'tis impoſſible but either Popery or Enthuſiaſm, ſhould like a Deluge overflow us; both of which we know make mens Spirits turbulent and unquiet, and aiming at nothing leſs than the enthroning of themſelves, though it be by pulling down with the hands of violence and rudeneſs any thing that ſtands in their way. This is a Mine made to blow us up withal, the very thoughts of which is enough to provoke the Patience, and raiſe the Paſſions of any man, though mortified in never ſo conſiderable a degree. And if the Youth of the Nation muſt be ſuffered to ſuck in with their Mothers Milk the Fathers Antipathy againſt the Church of *England*, we may promiſe our ſelves if we pleaſe Halcyon-days when this generation is wrought off, but alas! we ſhall find them like the *Hydra's* Head, one ſpringing up in the room of the other. And though I know theſe Reflections upon theſe new Schools will ſeem very grievous, and that I muſt incur a very ſevere Cenſure for it, yet I profeſs I cannot help it, for my ſenſe of it is ſo ſad, and according to that foreſight I have, it ſeems to me ſo very ruinous to the future Peace and Quietneſs of the Nation, that

I am afraid the Children unborn will riſe up and call them curſed who were the firſt Promoters and Undertakers of it; and though I would be charitable, yet methinks it looks too like a Deſign to entail that Revenge they cannot act themſelves, upon their Children to act for them in ſucceeding Times, which is a ſpirit as directly oppoſite to the Meekneſs of an honeſt Chriſtian, as Light is to Darkneſs. Oh if ſome of the old Puritans, who heedleſly vented ſome of thoſe Principles, from which our preſent Nonconformity took its Original and Riſe, were but alive for ſome few days, and had a juſt Relation of their Succeſſors actings, methinks I ſee with what indignation they would declare againſt theſe practices, and how eaſily they would be perſwaded, to quit thoſe Opinions, they now find by ſad experience make men ſo buſie and ſo reſtleſs. What! cannot theſe men be content to break Laws themſelves, and be winked at? but they muſt plant Schools of Sedition and diſſatisfaction, in the ſeveral parts both of City and Countrey? Oh, all you that have any regard to Religion, and zeal for the propagating the Graces of the Goſpel, in the hearts of men, divulge not this in every company, for 'tis enough to encreaſe that Atheiſtical Spirit, that is now too rife amongſt us, and to force leſs conſidering men, whether they will or no, to look upon Religion as a politick Engine

gine, fitted for any Deſign, mens Luſts and Paſſions, mens Intereſt and Advantage ſhall ſuggeſt unto them. To ſee men deliberately training up Youth in a direct oppoſition to thoſe Laws, in the preſervation of which the ſafety both of King and Kingdom are concerned, 'tis an unaccountable piece of confidence; to ſee men expreſſing no other Reſentments of his Majeſties Clemency and Forbearance, than what conſiſts in weakning the hands of Government, and multiplying parties to withſtand and fight againſt its Laws, 'tis an Ingratitude not eaſily to be parallel'd. From this bold Contrivance, we may juſtly expect, if not timely diſcouraged, the inevitable Ruine both of Church and State; and therefore from the thing it ſelf, and its miſerable Effects, let us all ſay, Good Lord deliver us.

4. This excellent Church receives very conſiderable damage from thoſe idle tales that are carried up and down, againſt the Reverend Biſhops and their Regular Clergy, whereby they are rendred either impious, or ridiculous: A thing which hath been all along uſed by our Adverſaries, although its being ſo I am ſure is not for their credit. And if they can but get any thing by the end whereby they may diſparage the prudence, or blot the Temperance and Sobriety of their Miniſter, why, preſently one hot-headed fellow or other poſts from one

company to another, and with all the ridiculous circumſtances in the World, tells his pleaſant ſtory. And Oh how do the zealots hug themſelves at ſuch an advantage to advance their cauſe again, and with what ſeeming pleaſure do the tatling Goſſips ſpread this news abroad at the next meeting of the Siſterhood! where the poor prieſt one while is laughed at, and another while with deep fetch'd ſighs pitty-ed and lamented, as a poor carnal wretch; and where at the ſame time from him they preſume to take their meaſures of all the reſt of the ſame profeſſion: and every one that is canonical, muſt preſently be arraigned and then condemned as a perſon wholly ignorant of the Myſteries of the Goſpel.

And that ſuch idle Stories may not want their full advantage, the Members of this Church muſt at the ſame time be bewailed as loſt men, as perſons given over by God to a vile and reprobate ſenſe; otherwiſe according to the profound judgment of theſe wiſe ones, it is impoſſible they ſhould ſit ſo contentedly under the Miniſtery of ſuch blind Guides, and ſubmit to ſuch beggerly elements which are ſo abhorred by all who are acquainted with thoſe new lights that in theſe latter days have ſprung up in the World.

And

And though upon the ſuppoſal that any of theſe idle ſtories are true, yet if the ſame thing befall any of their own gang, who we know are not without their faults, why, preſently ſhifts and excuſes are made, and either God ſees no Fault in *Iſrael*, or elſe the Fleſh was weak though the Spirit was ſtrong: but for a a member of the Church to fall into any errour, is preſently an argument of a Reprobate mind, of a ſoul forſaken by God; and he muſt not be admitted to any poſſibility of Reconciliation with Heaven, unleſs he renounce his former obligations to Authority and Laws, and herd himſelf amongſt theſe refined and ſpiritualized perſons. And now by this artifice the Church ſinks in the eſteem of many unwary perſons, and they ſtand ready upon ſuch ſiniſter repreſentations of her Members, to do or ſay any thing, whereby they may ſoil her beauty, or eclipſe her glory. But is this fair dealing? is it like the Spirit of the Goſpel, which thinketh no evil, much leſs with a tickling pleaſure ſpeaketh evil of others? Is this any argument that they are better and more experienced Chriſtians than their Neighbours: Can they upon this account vindicate and challenge to themſelves the right of being God's Children? and do they entail their Saintſhip upon their reviling, and loading with calumny and reproaches thoſe who are their betters,

ſuch as are entruſted with publick Offices, and therefore not to be accuſed under two or three Witneſſes? If this be their Religion, and one of the evidences of their being the only people of God, truly as yet I muſt demur, before I wiſh my ſelf of their Number: for according to my preſent belief of things, which I think is founded upon the plain declaration of Gods mind in Scripture, the clear contrary to theſe is what the Goſpel commands, and that Charity which our Saviour was an example of, I am ſure was that which the Apoſtle acquaints us with, namely ſuch a one as is ſo far from divulging, and laying open mens infirmities, that it covers a multitude of faults.

And though I know many of theſe things are forged, yet upon the admiſſion of them to be true, let theſe men if they can, prove either from Scripture or from Reaſon, that it is their duty to uncover their Brothers nakedneſs, and to render ſuch perſons ridiculous, whoſe very Office in all Ages, hath commanded an eſteem and veneration. No, no, this is a ſign amongſt many other things, that Conſcience is not ſo much concerned in the quarrel as is pretended; for I am ſure an honeſt tender conſcience rightly underſtood, is ſuch a one as is univerſally diſpoſed to every thing that is made matter of divine command, among

mong which covering, which I ſaid before, anothers faults, and reſtoring a faln brother in the Spirit of meekneſs, are plain and obvious. And therefore I muſt deſire thoſe, to whoſe ears ſuch ſpightful tales are brought, to conſider that the ſtories told are either true or falſe: If they be true, and of an hainous nature, they ought in their retirement to implore God's Grace for ſuch publick perſons, that they may do ſo no more, and according to their Intereſt in them, and acquaintance with them, to caution them againſt putting ſuch advantages into ſuch uncharitable perſons hands for the time to come; and if the ſtories be falſe, as thanks be to God many of them are, though told with all the degrees of boldneſs, they ought to vindicate their aſperſed brother and give ſuch rebukes to this buſie whiſperer as the nature of the crime calls for. But whether they be true or falſe, I will ſay, unleſs the fact alledged be very notorious indeed, that he is as great a tranſgreſſor who with ſo great a delight and forwardneſs divulges it abroad, as the other is in committing of it. And if this thing be but conſidered in its Principle and in its End and Deſign, we ſhall find, ſuch aggravations in it, as will eaſily induce us to believe this man, to be never the better Saint for his departure from the Church of *England*. For I do ſay this courſe is impious and diabolical,

a direct imitation of him who in Scripture is called the Accuſer of the Brethren; And let theſe men glory in their acquaintance with God and Chriſt as loudly as they pleaſe, yet I am ſure this ſpirit is from the Devil, and ſhall never find an entertainment and acceptance from him who is ſtyled Love it ſelf. And truly though for many Reaſons I have but a very ordinary opinion of the late Reformers, which I liſt not now to repeat, yet I will be ſo open as to tell the World this is one, to wit their readineſs to publiſh their curſed book of *Centuries*, and in it to divulge whatſoever they could invent or find for the defamation of the Clergy of the Church of *England*. An action as fully declarative of an Antichriſtian ſpirit, of an Helliſh temper as any I have met withal; and until this ſpirit be baniſhed, we muſt not allow them to be the only Saints, but we muſt believe that the Goſpel Spirit lodges more amongſt us of the Church, than amongſt them notwithſtanding their vain and confident boaſting.

5. The Church of *England* ſuffers very much by Simoniacal Contracts, by entring upon paſtoral charges indirectly, and leaping into preferments over thoſe gates and walls, which the Church hath raiſed on purpoſe, that none might enter upon her ſacred employments, and encouragements, but with Conſciences as clear

clear as the Sun at Noon. And amongſt many other theſe two things upon this account contribute towards the Churches loſs.

Firſt, as thereby the Conſcience of the Miniſter is debauched, and he thereby made very unfit to give thoſe Inſtructions, and wholſome counſels to his people, that otherwiſe he might do. For all wilful ſins, eſpecially ſuch a notorious one as Perjury, hardens a mans mind, and diveſts him, till repented of, of all the neceſſary and uſeful influences and aſſiſtances of Gods good ſpirit, and withal makes him careleſs, as of his own ſo of the Souls of others; and a man ſo eaſily enſnared by ſuch a ſin is eaſily induced by any temptation to a neglect of thoſe duties which his office calls for, and a remiſs performance of thoſe Ordinances, which were deſigned and commanded on purpoſe to reform and inſtruct the people. And where a Miniſter of the Goſpel is idle and careleſs in the execution of his duty, there the common people either run into diviſions, and oppoſite parties to him, or elſe grow rude and heathenish, both which are very miſchievous to the Church.

2. The Church is injured by that contempt that ſuch a thing brings upon their Teacher amongſt the common people; for though theſe contracts may be kept from legal proof, yet there are uſually ſuch circumſtances in them,

as make them ſhrewdly ſuſpected, which I could name, if it was convenient. And pray how can ſuch a man live in any regard and credit, who is believed to get a title to his living by creeping through the back door of perjury? Certainly the belief of this, muſt bar up the way, through which wholſome documents and true information of neceſſary things ſhould be conveyed into the peoples minds; and this is enough to ruine not only the reputation but the labours of any ſuch man whatſoever. And 'tis not poſſible for him to govern with that authority, and to thoſe good purpoſes he might do, who is believed a perſon of no principles nor Conſcience, but will ſwallow down any thing, and voluntarily incur the cenſure of the moſt perfidious wretch, rather than loſe any conſiderable advantage from the World.

And therefore I do heartily beg of the Lay Patrons (for thanks be to God in this particular we have no reaſon to complain of the Biſhops and the other Clergy, as to thoſe ſhares of Church preferment that are in their diſpoſal) I ſay I muſt beg the Lay Patrons to conſider ſeriouſly that that excellent Church in which their happineſs and ſafety is involved, ſuffers by their private gain, and that they ſet their own advantage againſt that of the Church their Mother, and that they do betray the Souls

of

of thoſe, to whom they ſend men of ſuch corrupted principles and forfeited minds as theſe are. And further I entreat them to conſider, that when they come to take a view of what they have done, they will find the money they received is the price of bloud, and that they ſell thoſe for whom Chriſt died, and muſt be accountable at the Laſt day, not only for their own Sin, but for that very Sin of Perjury the vicious Prieſt is guilty of; for he that invites a man to a ſin, is reckoned as if he had committed the ſin himſelf.

And further I offer to theſe mens conſiderations that unſpeakable diſcouragement, which by ſo doing they give to learning, and thoſe worthy improvements which render men really and indeed uſeful to the Church, and the Intereſt of immortal Souls, when Dunces who have more Money than Honeſty or Learning, ſhall climb into the beſt Preferments, and men of Parts, and Principles, who by pains and ſtudy have run throngh and well digeſted all neceſſary Arts and Sciences, muſt be forced to ſit down contented, with allowances every way diſproportioned to, and below their manifeſt deſerts and worth.

And if there be not ſome further remedy found out againſt this diſtemper, we may well expect in a ſhort time, to ſee the Church in a more forlorn and deſpicable condition than

now

now it is, which God of his goodneſs prevent. For I cannot forbear reaſſerting this, that the Church and State are ſo neceſſarily helpful to one another, that they will live and die together.

6. This Church receives no ſmall injury from the careleſs and remiſs attendance of many of her profeſſed admirers, upon her publick Devotions and Inſtructions. And though I do not think that Religion lays any obligation upon her Children to hear a Sermon every day of the week, nor to eſteem that time loſt and vainly ſpent in which we are not upon our knees in prayer; yet this I am ſure of, that we are obliged to attend, if not reaſonably prevented, upon all thoſe Ordinances, which the Church hath enjoyned us; and to omit them, is to violate our obligations to that Authority, to which we have vowed and profeſſed ſubjection.

And if we conſider well, we ſhall find that not only the neceſſity of our Souls (which by often and dutiful approaches to God in publick prayer, are preſerved in a warm and vigorous ſenſe of God, and ſo conſequently made more fearful of running into any courſe whereby he is offended,) requires this at our hands; but the being uſeful to others by our good examples, eſpecially if we be men of power and authority; for Examples with the common

common people are more prevalent, uſually, than Arguments and Demonſtrations. And therefore he that either out of a vain notion, that one Sermon a day is more than he can practiſe, or from a lazy and ſlothful temper, which too many are guilty of, or becauſe it is the beſt time he can ſpare from his other buſineſs, to indulge himſelf and his Neighbours in exceſſive and intemperate drinking, neglects not only the preaching but the publick prayers of the Church which he is bound to be preſent at Evening as well as Morning, why, I muſt tell him that he is an enemy to that Church of which he is a member, and puts an argument into her Adverſaries mouth, whereby he renders her contemptible.

And is it not a ſhame, tell me you who are the perſons guilty of this crime I am now accuſing, to ſee men more zealous in breaking than you are in preſerving the reputation of publick Laws? and to behold Faction more eagerly ſupported and upheld than Loyalty and obedience? And therefore I do in the name and behalf of the Church your Mother, beg and intreat you all to render her and her publick Devotions more venerable in the eyes of the common people, by your conſtant waiting upon all her Offices, upon all thoſe publick Miniſteries, wherein ſhe diſpenſes wholſome food to all her Children; for this will evidence that

which

which many people are unwilling to believe, to wit, that Eſſential Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs are as viſible and conſpicuous in the Members of our Church as in any other, and that if her Counſels be but followed, there are none that make nearer approaches to the Zeal and fervour, to the Innocence and ſimplicity of the Primitive Chriſtians, than the Sons of the Church of *England* do.

7. This Churches honour and due regard is leſſened by a perfunctory and careleſs conſideration of the confuſions and diſorders, that followed her diſſolution by the pretended power of a Parliament. For he that truly weighs what monſtrous Opinions preſently brake in upon us, ſuch as were deſtructive of all our Civil as well as Religious Rights and Liberty; he that reflects upon the impudence and boldneſs, wherewith every private fancy was vented and ſpread abroad, and how ſervants became our Maſters, and the Meaneſt of the people preſumed to handle ſacred things: further, he that conſiders the bloud was ſpilt and the treaſure was exhauſted, and all this for a thing they could never agree what it was; why, certainly he cannot but maintain a value and juſt eſteem for a Church, which by her Doctrines and Canons puts every thing into its proper place, and ſettles every perſon in his

his own office, and preſcribes him duties ſuitable to the ſphere in which he moves, giving a juſt power to Magiſtrates to enact, and puniſhing Subjects for any wilful diſobedience to thoſe Laws ſo enacted; enjoyning the Paſtor of every flock to teach the people all neceſſary duties, and commanding the people to ſuch a ſubmiſſion to thoſe Inſtructions, as is neither prejudicial to their Judgment of diſcretion, nor yet allows them pragmatically to ſcorn and cenſure whatſoever pleaſes not their own itching ears and over-curious palats.

And therefore let me here adviſe all men who are not perniciouſly reſolved, to take notice well of this one thing, and I am confident it will go very far toward their cure. Let them conſider the violence after this Church was down, offered to mens Eſtates for their conſcientious adherence to their Prince, the taking away the Lives of many of the good Subjects of the Kingdome purely for not ſiding with them againſt the known Fundamental Laws, the diveſting of many of the Nobility of their birthright, becauſe they purſued his Intereſt from whom their Titles of Honour were immediately derived: Let them conſider further the ſtrange Maxims of Policy by which they acted, after the taking down the Churches Fences, and every mans doing what was good in his own eyes, let them conſider the horrid and intolerable abuſes

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put upon the Providence of God, and at laſt the murther of the beſt of Kings; and I will warrant them, if they be cool and in their proper ſenſes, and not ſworn to the Intereſt of a Faction, they will keep alive in their breaſts a greater veneration for the Church of *England* than they had before. And though I am ſorry we have any occaſion to mention theſe things, and rubb up theſe old ſores, yet ſo long as men ſtand ready with their former principles and prejudices to act over the ſame part again, I think every honeſt man ought to let the unwary Vulgar know, what was the effect of theſe mens former undertakings, that ſo they may be armed againſt all temptations thereunto for the time to come, if ever opportunity, which God forbid, ſhould ſerve them.

8. The Church of *England* receives very conſiderable prejudice by *miſinterpreting and miſapplying of ſeveral Texts of Scripture,* which are forcibly preſſed contrary to their very grammatical ſenſe, to ſerve the ends and deſigns of her Adverſaries, and to draw off the common people from any good opinion of her. The common people, I ſay, whoſe ſize of underſtanding is ſo little, as to live wholly upon other mens Judgments, and to believe what theſe buſie Encroachers upon the Rights of Government ſay, without any ſerious reflections or conſiderations at all: and ſuch ſort of

of people making up the greateſt body, and upon that account being moſt uſeful for any wicked enterprize when opportunity ſhall ſerve, they are thoſe whom theſe men principally court, and whom they make proud by inſinuating into them a belief of their excellency above all the reſt of the World, and the peculiar eſteem God hath had for them from all eternity, without any conſideration of their good or evil deeds.

And if any man ſhall urge me with a falſe accuſation in this particular, I only refer him to the ſeveral printed Sermons of theſe men in the *Long Parliaments* time; and if he do not there find very wretched and diſhoneſt perverting of Scripture in this particular, I will acknowledge my ſelf deſerving the ſevereſt puniſhment ſo great a ſcandal calls for. I liſt not to bring mens names upon the ſtage, though I could ſwell this Treatiſe by ſuch quotations if I pleaſed. Only I will ask theſe men what agreement there is, betwixt *Egypt* with her garlick and onyons, and the Church of *England* and her Ceremonies? For my part I can find none, and I ſuppoſe all wiſe men are of my mind; and therefore there can be nothing elſe deſigned by this compariſon, but an ugly inſinuation into the Vulgar people, that our *King* and *Biſhops* are as great enemies to Gods people, as *Pharaoh* was to the Seed of *Abraham*; and that the

the Laws made for the preſervation and honour of our Church, are as great burthens, as thoſe the *Iſraelites* underwent by the cruelty of the *Egyptian* taskmaſters.

Further I would fain know, what affinity there is betwixt us and that *Babylon* that is made mention of in the *Revelations*, and threatned with ſo great a ruine? Yet *Babylon* being a word uſed to a very bad ſenſe, and to repreſent ſuch a great Degeneracy, why preſently this poor innocent Church that impoſes nothing upon the minds of men either in point of Belief or Practice but what is admirably ſerviceable to the ends and deſigns of Religion, ſhe muſt hand over head be called *Babylon*, and upon this ſcore the common people muſt be taught to run away from her, becauſe ſhe is under that denomination the Mother of Harlots, though many of thoſe that upon ſuch ſuggeſtions have forſaken her Diſcipline and Government, God knows have run themſelves out of breath, and have ſetled no where, till they have ſunk either into Atheiſm or Popery.

Further, when the Separatiſts invite the ignorant rabble to encreaſe their Numbers in order to affright Governours from interrupting them in their *Spiritual enjoyments*, as they call them, by ſuch places of Scripture as that 2 *Corinthians* 6. 17. *Come out from among them, and be you ſeparate, touch no unclean thing*, are they

they not very unworthy, or elſe very ignorant in the application of it to our Church? for upon a true conſideration, that place refers to nothing but the Idolatry of the Heathens, and hath no Argument in it, if they cannot prove us as truly Idolatrous as the Heathens were; until the doing of which they ought, by all the obligations of honeſty, to let our people live peaceably and quietly amongſt us, ſerving God according to the appointments and Inſtitutions of our Church: and if they will but give us reſt and peace ſo long, we need not fear their vying Numbers with us.

Again, when they engage the credulous Multitude to withdraw from our publick Devotions, by citing that place of the Apoſtle, 2 *Coloſ.* 20, 21. *Touch not, taſte not, handle not*, which refers (upon an impartial enquiry into the Apoſtles meaning) to certain Impoſitions, ſuch as abſtaining from Marriage, and ſome ſorts of meats as utterly unlawful, which were not ſo, and ſo became real encroachments and uſurpations upon the Chriſtian liberty, why, though this ſtrikes at the Church of *Rome*, which impoſes upon the minds of men things as abſolutely neceſſary, which have no ſuch neceſſity, neither in their own nature, nor by vertue of any command from God, yet it reaches not at all any legal injunction of our Church, which is recommended as indifferent,

and declared not to change its nature by being commanded by Authority, and that it is alterable when it ſeems good to the ſame Authority, which is all we ſay of our Ceremonies.

And now ſo long as the people by ſuch ſlight artifices as theſe, are to be deceived, and that there are certain buſie and needy perſons, who make a trade of impoſing thus upon them, ſo long we cannot expect to keep our Church in a flouriſhing ſtate. And to ſpeak my mind freely, when I take notice of the education of the greateſt part of men, and their natural jealouſie of their ſuperiours, I rather wonder, conſidering all things, that we have ſo many continue in our Communion ſtill. Though I hope a time will come when the people will be better informed and warned againſt ſuch evil deſigners, as too many of theſe men are. And theſe reflections neceſſarily inform me of another head under which I may bring the preſent miſery of our Church, and that is,

9. The *credulity and eaſineſs of the common people* to take in whatſoever is ſuggeſted to them, by men pretetending more than ordinary ſanctity and holineſs. Alas their Judgments being but weak and crazy, and their improvements very ſmall (for which they ſtand engaged chiefly to a careleſs education) and their affections being the chief Ringleaders of them

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into Belief as well as Action, why let but a crafty fellow come, and utter himſelf with a loud and *Stentor-like* voice, let him open his throat till he be hoarſe again and make ſeveral ſorts of faces, let him but pretend a more than ordinary pity and compaſſion for their Souls, telling them God hath ſent him on purpoſe to reſcue them out of the jaws of miſery and deſtruction, and alas let it be what it will he utters, though never ſo nonſenſical and rude, though never ſo heretical and blaſphemous, yet it is ſwallowed down as glib as a gilded pill, and the ſubtle deſigner is taken into their Houſes as an Angel newly dropt down from Heaven; And Oh whas running and riding to hear this excellent and inſpired perſon, and with what power and demonſtration of the Spirit does he preach! And the eaſie Multitude preſently enroll themſelves in God's eternal Regiſter, and cry up themſelves as his elect and peculiar Veſſels, becauſe God hath taken ſuch care of them, as to ſend ſo powerful a Meſſenger amongſt them.

And though I could produce ſufficient evidence of the truth of this from the Hiſtories and Accounts of the late bad times, yet I will be ſparing; and only for the confirmation of what I have here aſſerted, refer the Reader to the ſtory of Mrs. *Hutchinſon* in *New England.*

We know very well that the people that firſt went over thither, were ſuch as had notoriouſly forſaken the Church of *England*, and were therefore amongſt one another cryed up as the moſt Godly and tender conſcienced people in the world, ſuch as longed after nothing more than to bathe themſelves in the pure ſtreams, and to breath in the clear air of Goſpel Ordinances; people, who were inwardly acquainted with Gods will, being his ſecret and hidden ones, and manifeſting themſelves ſo by expoſing their lives and fortunes in croſſing the Seas, and taking up their habitations in an howling deſert, and all this out of principles of Conſcience, and an earneſt deſire to worſhip God *according to the pattern in the Mount*.

And yet theſe very people, who if you will believe the brags they made of themſelves, had an Unction from the holy one, and were thereby impowered to know all things, who were cryed up as wiſe ſober and well-grounded Chriſtians, why no ſooner did they hear the charming voice of this bold and daring woman, (though the things delivered by her had by their own confeſſion the whole current of Scripture againſt them) but they preſently cryed her up as one raiſed up of God for ſome great work; and amongſt many other things, the calling of the Jews was at hand, and ſhe was to be

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the Inſtrument of it. And as the ſtory ſays,(writ by themſelves,) ſhe had more reſort to her for counſel and clearing up mens ſpiritual eſtates, than any Miniſter, nay than all the Elders in the Countrey.

And if this be not a ſufficient evidence of the eaſineſs and weakneſs of the common people, I cannot tell what is. And how far ſuch people are to be truſted with liberty to hear any Deceiver that ſets up for a Guide and Director of the people, I leave the Governours of the Kingdom, whoſe concernments are of greater weight and moment than mine own, to judge. Only this I will aſſert, that had the Common people been wiſer, or the Deceivers of them fewer, I am ſure the Church had been in a better ſtate than now it is.

10. Again, the ſtiffneſs of the common people, and their pertinacious adherence to whatſoever they have heedleſly ſucked in againſt the preſent Government under which they live, is another ground of our Churches decay.

For let theſe men be but once prejudiced againſt any thing upon the leaſt account, and they become next to unalterable, and it muſt be a great deal of time and a conſiderable addition of knowledge and underſtanding that can bring them off. This is obvious to every obſerving man whatſoever. And therefore we ought to

take eſpecial care, that nothing be inſinuated into them, but what is wholſome and ſavoury, but what tends to peace and quietneſs, and to the preſervation of thoſe ſeveral ſocieties they help to make up; for you may as ſoon hope to remove a Mountain, as to bring ſuch people, whoſe Reaſon is ſubjected to the Impreſſions of paſſion and fanſie, to a right underſtanding and a modeſt and hearty retractation of their formerly imbibed errors. For though they can give no tolerable account of the grounds of their Opinions, yet they have learned confidence enough to laugh at and deſpiſe all that can be offered for the conviction of their judgments; and they will be in the Right, though all the reſt of the World, and many of thoſe much wiſer than themſelves, be in the wrong. And though they cannot argue, yet they are taught to throw dirt in the face of him that attempts their reduction, and to load him with all thoſe Names, by which both Idols and Idolaters are called and repreſented in Holy Scripture.

And therefore upon this very conſideration, I heartily recommend it, both to Parents and Maſters, that they keep their Children, and their Servants from reſorting to ſuch places, where they are in danger of having their Judgments thus poyſoned and infected, for they cannot imagine the great trouble that may redound from

from thence, as well to themſelves as to their Governours: for aſſuredly there is nothing makes men more proud and inſolent, more buſie and headſtrong, more obſtinate and ſtubborn, than Principles of Schiſm and Separation; and if any man ſhall judge me harſh and cenſorious for ſaying ſo, I dare undertake to give ſuch plain and late Inſtances of the truth of what I have ſaid, as I am certain will convince any perſon, who does not reſolvedly ſhut his eyes againſt the Light.

11. We may further lay this preſent ill ſucceſs of our Church at the door of thoſe *Atheiſtical principles* that have ſpread ſo far and near in the Kingdom.

For the Church being made up of a number of perſons linked together in the belief of ſuch and ſuch Articles of Faith, and in Covenant and promiſe to worſhip God according to his will and pleaſure, why it is impoſſible when that which is the Foundation of all this is taken away, but the ſuperſtructure ſhould fall immediately. And further, the Cenſures of this Church being deſigned to puniſh men in this world, in order to free them from the plagues of another, why alas theſe Cenſures muſt needs be mocked at by thoſe who have got up to the belief, that there is no ſuch thing at all as another world. And that a man muſt by neceſſary conſequence

believe, if he think there is no God; for theſe great Fundamentals ſtand and fall together. And upon this ſcore where Atheiſm hath got any intereſt or credit, you will find no men more looſe to Government, more ſevere in their reflections upon the Canons and Conſtitutions of the Church, and who indeed make nothing elſe but a laughter at the whole Syſteme of Religion.

And therefore Atheiſm and its principles being ſo vaſtly pernicious to all Churches whatſoever, it will not be amiſs to inquire into its Original, that ſo the root from whence theſe poiſonous branches grow may be ſtubb'd up; and I am afraid we ſhall find many of thoſe perſons concerned in the preſent growth of this bad weed, who would very willingly be looked upon as the chiefeſt dreſſers in Gods Vineyard.

1. The Atheiſm that is at preſent ſo rife among us, ows its growth to the changeableneſs of many mens principles who pretend to more than ordinary Godlineſs.

He that meaſures Religion, (as God knows the greateſt part of Mankind do) not by its intrinſick worth, and that full and rational evidence that it brings along with it, nor by its genuine and proper influences upon the minds of men where it is heartily received, but by the actions of a great number of men in the World,

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he muſt needs enter his proteſt againſt it, and judge it as an Engine framed and made for nothing elſe but to ſerve turns and cheat the World: and upon ſerious and impartial reflections upon things, we ſhall find from hence have proceeded many mens odd conceits of this excellent thing called Religion. For caſting their eyes abroad, and obſerving how common a thing it is for men to ſhift their Principles, when their Intereſt lyes at ſtake, and thoſe too ſuch men as are in vogue among the people for the moſt precious Saints, why alas prompted by their luſts and ſeduced by Satan, they have firſt queſtioned whether there be any ſuch thing in reality and truth as Religion yea or no, and then by degrees have laughed at it as the product either of knavery or melancholy. And I wiſh our Brethren of the ſeparation could waſh their hands of the ruine that hath befaln Religion upon this account. 'Tis true, no men more ready to complain of the preſent degeneracy of the age than they; and ſo far as thoſe complaints are the effects of ſorrow for ſin, and not of deſign to miſrepreſent the Government, ſo far they do well and are to be commended: but I do heartily adviſe them to look from whence this degeneracy proceeds. Was ſin ſo bold-faced, and notorious impieties ſo confident and open, before theſe complainants invaded the Churches Rites, and ſlackned the

the Reins of Government, by which the heady multitude were kept in ſome good awe and order? I deſire them heartily to read the Hiſtory of the times from the Reformation to the beginning of the late dreadful War, and to tell me whether from the higheſt to the loweſt there were ſuch numbers of men that ſcoffed at Religion, and lived in a neglect of all thoſe Offices which are appointed for men to keep an intercourſe with Heaven, and a ſenſe of a Divine Being upon their Souls? No, if they will be impartial, they muſt needs confeſs that Religion met with better entertainment both in Churches and in Families than now it does.

And therefore whence muſt we fetch this ſtrange Apoſtaſie, this horrid contempt of things that were handled with more reverence even among the Heathens, who are only conducted by the glimmering Light of Nature? Why in ſhort, one great Reaſon of it hath been theſe mens inconſiſtency with themſelves, and changing their principles upon every change of affairs.

At firſt many of them were modeſt, and a regulation of ſome things in the Government as it then ſtood eſtabliſhed, was a bleſſing that would make the Nation happy: but afterwards, when a little ſucceſs put a greater power into their hands, why then the ancient Govern-

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ment of the Church muſt be ſtubb'd up both root and branch, and forſooth we muſt have another Model founded in a Divine Right, and nothing leſs than Scripture and Apoſtolical Example muſt patronize it, and then the Kingdom of God was come down amongſt us, and *Babylon* was faln, and the Beaſt ſmitten through the fifth rib. But alas within a few years, (I had almoſt ſaid moneths) many of thoſe who had cryed up the new Diſcipline and Covenant as the *pattern in the Mount*, as the greateſt bulwark againſt *Romiſh* incurſions, went away from it, and by the help of a ſorry diſtinction, were found very buſie in overthrowing all National Churches, and now nothing muſt be Goſpel Worſhip, but what was after the Independent cut. And 'tis very well known, what skirmiſhes there were betwixt the Presbiterians and Independents for their ſeveral Platforms, what petitioning on one ſide for liberty of Conſcience, and what on the other againſt it; with I know not how many Reaſons tendered to the High Court of Parliament: and yet after all this no ſooner was the King come in, and the Eccleſiaſtical Laws revived, and many perſons formerly unjuſtly thrown out, reſtored to their properties and free-hold again, but thoſe very men who had with full cry and open mouth purſued the Congregational men, proclaimed them Schiſmaticks, and great enemies

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to the work of Reformation that was then upon the wheel: I ſay, thoſe men contrary to their formerly avowed principles, Declarations, Remonſtrances and Petitions, Prayers and Preachments, fall in with the ſame practiſes, and gather Churches out of Churches. And nothing is more frequent now than to meet with Books dedicated to the Flock of ſuch a man, and to the Congregation over whom ſuch a man is overſeer; when God knows, it may be thoſe people that make up the body of theſe Flocks live in all the quarters and corners of the town and countrey. Now whether this be adherence to principles, or beſpeak a man fixed and well grounded, I leave any man to judge. No no, it looks like a deſign, and as far as actions can ſpeak it tells the world that 'tis not Religion about which all this ſtir is made, but Pride and Intereſt.

And now pray let us conſider what judgment can ſome men make of Religion, if they have no better conveyance of its worth into them, than ſuch Examples and Inſtances as theſe are? Alas it makes them throw dirt in its face, and to cry it down, as a thing not worthy of that care that it hath met withal from ſeveral Laws; and they are apt to conclude, that were it grounded in any Reaſon, or had any Demonſtration on its ſide, certainly men of education and generous breeding would not be ſo

long

long before they underſtand it, and after they ſeem to underſtand it, ſo fickle and uncertain in their Notions of it.

And truly I think this is no ſmall cauſe of our preſent Atheiſm, and I wiſh with all my heart our Brethren would lay it cloſe to heart; and when they complain of the Iniquities of the times either publickly or privately, amend at the ſame time that which hath been ſo great an occaſion of it.

2. Atheiſm makes room for it ſelf by thoſe unjuſt and wicked actions committed by men who pretend to more than ordinary ſanctity.

What muſt ſome men think of Religion, eſpecially ſuch as have met with a careleſs education, who have not had their natural notions of Religion ſtrengthened by wholſome documents and good Examples; what, I ſay, muſt theſe men think of Religion, when they behold a violent ſtickler for the Rights of the Lord Jeſus as he pretends, lift up his eyes to heaven, and then thruſt his hand into his Neighbours pocket? when they hear him profeſs himſelf ready to deny himſelf of any thing though never ſo profitable or pleaſurable, provided the cauſe of God may flouriſh, and at the ſame time buſie in ſigning Orders for ſequeſtring other mens Eſtates, and turning their Wives and Children out of doors, without any conſidera-

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tion of ſex or age? when they ſee him riding from place to place to help to ſettle Religion, and at the ſame time plotting how to rob his natural Prince of his throne and life together? Alas ſuch obſervations as theſe are enough to turn any heedleſs man's ſtomach againſt Religion, and to beget in him an averſneſs to all its Laws and Inſtitutions.

And here lyes a great part of the preſent miſery as well as wickedneſs of our Nation; We had never beheld wickedneſs ſtalking in the ſtreets at noon day without a bluſh, and unnatural villanies committed in the face of the Sun it ſelf, if men had not defaced and waſted the Principles of Religion by ſuch obſervations and reflections as theſe are. 'Tis this from whence thoſe drolls and ſarcaſtical reflexions upon Scripture have ſprung and iſſued, and upon the ſcore of which our great Lord and Maſter hath been pierced afreſh by blaſphemies and prophane witticiſms upon his Perſon and his Doctrine. And to give proof of this, let but any man mark, and he ſhall find, it is not Argument he ſhall meet withal from theſe lewd perſons, (when they are called to a juſt account for theſe groſs and ſcandalous reflections upon things Venerable and Sacred) whereby they defend themſelves from the blows that at any time are given them by wiſe and pious men, but preſently references to ſuch and ſuch pretended Saints and Zealots,

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with a recounting their many good and Godly Deeds they have committed, and preſently Religion muſt be in fault, and anſwer for all the miſcarriages of her pretended Votaries; which though it be not reaſonable, yet if it be judged ſo by theſe half-witted and licentious men, 'tis all one, and hath the ſame influence upon them as if it were.

And I wiſh with all my heart that this bad effect had been limited to the late bad times; but alas we find it ſtill amongſt us, and no ſooner does any of theſe great pretenders break (upon which ſcore I could wiſh fewer of theſe Great Bigots were publick undertakers) but preſently Religion is call'd to a ſevere account, and preſently our ears are fill'd with no other noiſe than ſuch as this: I, I, this it is to be Godly, do not you ſee? no men more ready to cheat and undermine all ſorts of perſons, yea their very dear Brethren themſelves: I, theſe are your Saints that are ready to cry Stand off unto their Fellow Chriſtians, and to proclaim them unfit for their communion. Do not you ſee what they are? by what looſe and uncertain principles they are governed? and how under a pretence of a more intimate acquaintance with things that are ſpiritual, they are wanting to ſuch duties as are moral and eternal, ſuch wherein Religion rightly underſtood does or ought to conſiſt?

And

And in concluſion, the obſervers of theſe things from ſuch obvious and apparent Notices, ſuffer Religion to loſe its eſteem in their Breaſts, and when that is gone, it is no wonder (conſidering the many ſpiritual enemies that ſtand ready to take part with them againſt it) that they are by degrees wrought into a downright contempt and ſcorn of it.

3. Atheiſm makes its way amongſt us in this Age by thoſe unworthy ſcandals and aſperſions that are faſtened upon Churchmen, by whom Religion in all Ages hath been chiefly derived into the minds of men, and upon whoſe reputation with all ſorts of people, depends very much either the enlargement of Religions Kingdom, or elſe its confinement to more particular and narrow quarters. And therefore all men who wiſh it good ſpeed ought to be very tender how they load any perſon conſecrated to ſuch an office with any indignity or reproach whatſoever.

But however though the Honour of Religion is ſo much concerned in this, yet we find a company of Men, (I and thoſe too, apt enough to make great boaſts of their zeal for God) very willing to pick up any ſtory whereby they may miſrepreſent and diſparage any man obedient to the Laws, and rather than fail, becauſe words cannot ſpread themſelves far enough though

though ſpoke to conſiderable numbers, they will ſpit their venome from the Preſs, and expoſe a whole order of Men to the contempt and ſcorn of the people, by laying ſuch loads at their doors, as indeed muſt needs render them odious to any perſon, that hath any ſenſe of things yet left upon his mind: witneſs that late Funeral Sermon for a great Doctor by one whoſe words we know (more is the pity) go far and near amongſt too many of thoſe who ſeparate from the Church of *England*; which if it had not been ſo handſomely and withal ſo modeſtly chaſtiſed already, I would here have beſtowed ſome of that correction upon it, that was its due.

But now in the mean time when men of any looſe inclinations, as God knows the world ſwarms with them, men who are very willing in compliance with the commands and perſwaſions of their luſts, to throw off all the reſtraining Notices of Religion; when theſe men I ſay ſhall meet with ſuch violent paſſions, with ſuch vehement invectives, with ſuch odious appellations, with ſuch wicked characters and Repreſentations of ſo great a Number of men, and thoſe too ſuch as have enjoyed all opportunities for improving their minds, and bettering their manners, why how eaſily may they from hence draw concluſions againſt Religion, and weaken its Government in their Hearts

and Conſciences? which we know ſeconded by ſome other helps and advantages diſpoſe the Soul for a total rooting up all kindneſs and affection for it: And when the Devil hath ſo far prevailed, I am ſure he wants not many Leagues to a total conqueſt of the Man, and to an abſolute ſubmiſſion to his juriſdiction; which I think is a ſufficient argument of an Atheiſtical ſpirit, and that God is not in all the mans thoughts.

4. Atheiſm gains ground by the non-execution of thoſe Laws which command the People to wait upon thoſe inſtitutions whereby Religion is inſtilled into their minds.

It is not to be expected, conſidering the different education of Perſons, founded in the different conditions and providential allotments of their parents, but that there muſt needs be a vaſt diſproportion in their parts and apprehenſions; and though ſome men are trained up with all the care and diligence, by perſons of great Prudence as well as Learning, and thereby are enabled to underſtand their Duties from thoſe Conſiderations of things, which by vertue of that education they either can or have made; yet others again there are, whoſe acquaintance with things through a more careleſs breeding, reaches no further than the bare objects of ſenſe, and whoſe Judgments are ſo weak, as to be conſtantly impoſed upon by ſtrong Fancy and

and headlong Imagination, and therefore underſtand little but what is forced into them, and comply with few Laws, but what the fear of the penalties of thoſe Laws compel them to.

They are firſt taught to follow the oxe and the aſs that have no underſtanding, and unleſs they be affrighted into an attendance upon thoſe Ordinances, where they may have ſome further knowledge derived into them, they are very willingly contented with that employment ſtill, and their heavy thoughts aſcend no higher.

And therefore to relax thoſe Laws which enjoyn theſe leaden people under a penalty, and ſuch a one of which they are moſt ſenſible (to wit that of the purſe) is at the ſame time to give them a commiſſion to live in the neglect of all thoſe publick Duties, whereby the natural Notions of Religion are raiſed into ſome degree of life, and kept ſo after they are raiſed; and pray then what becomes of theſe people? why they ſink into all manner of Brutiſhneſs, God is not in their thoughts at all, and to talk to them of any thing that is Religious, is to diſcourſe perfectly out of their ken and knowledge; they ſavour nothing but what belongs to the Cart and the Plow, and God knows their Children are brought up in the ſame way, and hear not a word of God nor of their

Duties to him, from one year to another, and ſo are trained up as very Atheiſts as themſelves, and thereby prepared for little elſe but picking and ſtealing, for every thing that is vile and wicked.

And this is a thing upon the ſcore of which I cannot reflect upon the careleſs and indifferent execution of thoſe Laws that are made purpoſely for the Churches peace and ſafety, without ſome conſiderable proportions of grief and ſorrow. I find the inconvenience of it ſo ſad in the Pariſh over which God hath ſet me, that I wonder our Brethren of the ſeparation ſhould deſire their liberty at ſo dear a rate, and inveigh againſt thoſe, who deſire the Laws might take place, and ſerve the purpoſes for which they were intended. For if things continue as they have done, and Magiſtrates for the ſake of ſome few pretending Religion and Conſcience, ſhall ſuffer ſo many hundreds in many Pariſhes to live in a neglect of all publick Worſhip whatſoever, it is an eaſy matter to foreſee what will become of Religion and civil Government together.

And thus I have given an account of that preſent, and God knows too bold Atheiſm that is ſo common in the Nation; and though I believe from my heart that theſe forementioned things have been the root from whence it hath

ſprung,

ſprung, and to which it owes its principal original and riſe, yet I wiſh there be not ſomething amongſt us who profeſs our ſelves true friends to the Churches Diſcipline, that gives further growth and nouriſhment to this poyſonous plant.

I do therefore earneſtly deſire my Brethren to conſider with themſelves, whether they do nothing that contributes to this unhappy alienation of mens Minds from the belief and ſenſe of a Divine Majeſty.

I am not willing to quarrel any man for what he does by the allowance of the Laws; yet I muſt needs ſay thus much (and I hope I ſhall offend no wiſe man in it) that did our Church-men reſide more in thoſe places, where the Churches proviſions for them and their Families are plentiful and encouraging, it would conduce very much to the honour of the Church of which they are Members, and take away one main plea for ſome mens prophaneneſs and irreligion.

For as I have ſaid before, the Religion of the Common people depends very much upon the credit and eſteem of their Spiritual Guides and Teachers, and wherever that hath ſunk, Religion hath accordingly been in the waine: and therefore when Church-men, inſtead of feeding their people with conſtant and wholſome Documents, neglect them themſelves, or

commit them to the charge of ſuch whoſe neither piety nor learning commend them to their value, why this is a ſure way to inſinuate little thoughts of their Miniſters into them, and they quickly cry them down, as men who mind not them but theirs; who provided they can but grow fat by Temporal accrewments, care not how lean the Souls of their people are. The truth is, I have often heard ſuch ſevere reflections made againſt ſuch perſons, and thoſe not by diſcontented ſchiſmaticks, but by men heartily devoted to the Intereſt of the Church, and many of thoſe, perſons that have, by their Princes favour, the execution of Laws and publick Juſtice committed to them, that I could not but wiſh all places, eſpecially thoſe more populous, or more rich than ordinary, in ſuch mens hands as would take care to prevent ſuch ſcandals for the time to come. For Fanaticiſm is ſo routed and baffled a cauſe, that when we come to perſwade any man to return to obedience to our Church, he uſually lets fall the old thredbare arguments, upon which Diſobedience and Separation at firſt were founded, and recurs to the careleſneſs of many of our Preachers, and by this would make the eaſie World believe, that our Church that countenances ſuch Droans, is not of God. And if I have offended any one by this plain dealing, I do beg their pardon, and I think 'tis nothing

but

but what is my due, becauſe I am certain 'tis nothing but zeal for the Church my Mother that hath forced me to it.

Again if any thing to the prejudice of God and his Religion as it ſtands eſtabliſhed by Law amongſt us, ariſes from the corruption of thoſe Officers that belong to the Eccleſiaſtical Courts, if Church Cenſures, eſpecially that of Excommunication, be bought and ſold, and men ſit there as in a Common Market, not to puniſh evil Doers, but to make merchandiſe, and to enlarge their Fortunes, though it be to the Churches ruine, I hope our Reverend Prelates, the Fathers of this poor deſpiſed Church, will uſe all care and diligence to prevent the deſtruction both of Religion, and the Church which is threatned by ſuch vile and ungodly practiſes as theſe are.

12. Further we are very much inconvenienced, and our Church receives very conſiderable diſadvantages from the imprudent way of executing Juſtice, by many of our ſubordinate Magiſtrates, upon the offenders of thoſe Laws whereby the Churches Rights and Priviledges are ſecured.

The common people who uſually take their meaſures of things falſely, and judge them not by their eſſential properties, or by their neceſſary habitude and relation to one another, but by the practiſes of thoſe who pretend a kindneſs

to, and veneration for them, when they ſee Magiſtrates, thoſe to whom the ſword of Juſtice is committed, fall into bitter rage, and expreſſing that rage by unſavoury words, by countenances darting forth nothing but flames and fire-balls, when they hear them ratling forth their horrid oaths, and wiſhing ſuch curſes as carry with them the greateſt ruine and deſolation as well to ſoul as body; further, when they obſerve any of them to make unwary reflections upon Religion in general, by reaſon of theſe mens miſcarriages in the defence of any thing that looks like a particular limb or member of it: why alas theſe bitter paſſions, theſe ill timed and violent words preſently beget in theſe people a great opinion of themſelves, and that becauſe ſuch perſons are their Judges: and they make no ſcruple to plead their Cauſe to be of God, becauſe ſuch ungodly men are ſo ready to puniſh them for their defence and propagation of it. And upon this very account they clap one the other upon the back, and reſolve unanimouſly to go on with what they have begun, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition they ſhall meet withal: for who would not ſuffer the loſs of Eſtate, Liberty or Life itſelf in a cauſe againſt which ſuch ungodly men are ſo ſevere and bitter? and who would not expect Heaven for a reward hereafter, who meet with ſuch harſh and cruel dealings from men,

men, who do too much by their oaths and curſes betray themſelves to be the Agents and Inſtruments of Hell?

And though this is but a popular plea, and will not hold water when it comes to be thoroughly ſearched and tryed, though Laws are never the worſe for the wickedneſs of thoſe to whom the execution of them is committed, and though Juſtice is the ſame thing, when done by a wicked as a Godly Magiſtrate; yet for our *Sions* ſake I could wiſh with all mine Heart, that our Magiſtrates, when ſuch Malefactors are brought before them, would execute publick Juſtice like men who do not appear to ſacrifice to their own revenge, but who deſign a publick good, to wit the reducing people to thoſe Principles of ſubjection and obedience, without which we muſt needs be expoſed to continual dangers and hazards.

It is not to be imagined how theſe refractory perſons are ſilenced, when they appear before Magiſtrates of Prudence and Diſcretion, ſuch as treat them with all tenderneſs and pity, repreſenting to them the evil of their doing, and gravely admoniſhing them againſt ſuch doings for the time to come, executing the Laws upon them with all the ſymptomes of grief and trouble, with all the demonſtrations of a Spirit that carries in it true compaſſion for thoſe who igno-

ignorantly err, and a readineſs heartily to pray for thoſe who are obſtinate and wilful; this is to follow the Apoſtles advice, to reſtore our faln Brethren with the ſpirit of meekneſs, and this is the only way to beget in them a belief, that as truly pious, tender and gracious ſpirits may lodge in the Breaſts of men every ways obedient to thoſe Laws (they by their wily Preachers are made to believe, are deſtructive of the Rights of the Lord Jeſus) as in any men of any other, yea of their own particular perſwaſion. Nay for ought I know, this prudent and compaſſionate carriage may be the occaſion of their recovery from their preſent ſeparation. For certainly nothing more pacifies Wrath and Anger (from which we all know Nonconformity receives no inconſiderable ſtrength and addition) than a word in ſeaſon, a ſoft word, a wiſe carriage even to Delinquents themſelves, eſpecially when all this is done by men of Authority and Reputation in their Neighbourhood.

And therefore I do here put up my hearty Prayers to Almighty God, for all our Chiefs and Worthies, in whoſe hands the defence and ſafety of our excellent and yet deſpiſed Church is lodged, that as *Judgment may run down like water and Righteouſneſs like a mighty ſtream*, ſo That *Rigkteouſneſs* may meet with *Peace* and love, and they *may kiſs each other*:

and

and as I do not wiſh the ſuſpenſion of any Laws, wherein the welfare of Societies is wrapt, ſo I do wiſh, that whenſoever they are put in execution, it may be in ſuch a way as may convince gainſayers, and ſtop the mouths of all thoſe, who lye at catch to take advantage from the haltings either of Magiſtrates or Miniſters.

Laſtly, This Church loſes very much of its deſerved reputation by thoſe mean and ſcanty proviſions and ſupplies that are made for many of her Children, whoſe educations and improvements entitle them to greater encouragements than moſt of the Vicaridges in *England* are endowed withal; and till this be remedied, as I hinted ſomewhat before, we muſt never have things ſo proſperous and ſucceſsful on the Churches ſide as ſhe does indeed deſerve: For 'tis impoſſible (conſidering how things go, and are apprehended by the major part of the World) for Clergy-Men to conciliate a juſt reſpect to themſelves, and thereby to recommend the Government to the love and liking of the Vulgar, without ſuch Incomes as are agreeable to their Function, and will enable them to be of the giving as well as receiving hand.

And truly when I have ſate down ſometimes, and conſidered with my ſelf the ſeveral reaſons and occaſions of the late cruel and bloudy War,

I could not but reſolve both it, and the dreadful conſequences of it, amongſt ſome other things, into this of which I am now complaining: and I have often thought, that it had not been poſſible for the people of *England* to have been drawn into ſuch a combination and confederacy againſt ſo excellent a Prince, had they not been ſtrangely perverted and abuſed by ſome diſcontented and ſelf-ſeeking knaves. And who they were 'tis no hard matter to conjecture; for if you had gone before the War into Cities and incorporated Towns, where uſually the ſpiritual Livings are made up of few and petty Tythes, there you ſhould have found a Male-contented Gentleman had fixt his habitation, making ſome tolerable ſhow of Hoſpitality eſpecially to the Mayor or Aldermen and their Brethren, and by his advice and means a factious Preacher brought in, depending upon voluntary ſubſcriptions for his livelihood; who by tones and geſtures, by ſhrugs and winks, by all popular artifices was continually ſuggeſting ſuſpicions of the Government to the people, (the Dames eſpecially, who they ſay in thoſe places and in thoſe times governed the Right Worſhipful themſelves,) and the great Themes of their Diſcourſes were the Wickedneſs of the times, the encroachments of the Biſhops upon the Rights of the Lord Jeſus, the ſtinting of the ſpirit by Forms of Prayer, the ſevere dealing

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ing with the people of God, (that was themſelves) but withal (which was a great cordial to their oppreſſed ſpirits,) the great Reaſons of the Saints joyful expectation of better times, fetched out of *Daniel* or *Revelations*, places admirably fitted to the Dames apprehenſions and underſtandings, with an hundred ſuch like popular inſinuations as theſe; and by this means the people were taught to ſuſpect their Governours as Enemies to the cauſe of God, and from thence brought to an hatred of them, and ſo by degrees fitted for any undertaking theſe cunning Leaders ſhould in the name of God and the Lord Jeſus animate them unto. And by theſe ways were the people of *England* ſeduced into the moſt unnatural rebellion, which ended in the moſt horrid Murther that Hiſtory can parallel. Whereas had theſe Great Towns been furniſhed with ſuch Encouragements as might have invited men of integrity and learning to have ſate down amongſt them, the People had been better taught, and conſequently diſpoſed to nothing but what was expreſſive of Loyalty and Obedience, of their hearty affection and eſteem for him, to whoſe care and Government the providence of God had committed them. For let but the common people hear nothing but what is agreeable to the Laws of Societies and Bodies Politick, let the Doctrines they are made acquainted with be ſuch as make

for

for peace and order, and you ſhall find no men more tractable, nor yet more zealous. And upon this very ſcore I have often wiſhed, that all thoſe perſons who are ſuffered to diſcourſe to Multitudes, were men of prudence, and orderly complyance with the Laws under which we live; we might I am ſure then hope for a longer continuance of happineſs and proſperity in the Nation, than we can (if ſome men enjoy the liberty which contrary to ſo many Statute Laws they have uſurped) expect.

And now that which I infer from this reflection is this, That if ſuch ſhort proviſions for men of worth and education has been the occaſion of the State and Churches ruine once already; who can tell but it may be of as evil conſequence again? And therefore I think the whole Nation ows thanks to our preſent Parliament for their late readineſs to remedy this evil by conſidering ſome further kindneſs to the Clergy than was ſhown at the firſt alienation of Church Revenues. And I will once be ſo bold as to ſay, that it had been never the worſe for the Crown of *England* (conſidering what Spirits have roſe up ſince that great purge *Henry* the Eighth gave the Church) had all thoſe Impropriations that were found annexed to Monaſteries and Abbyes, been given to the countenancing and ſupporting a learned and orthodox

orthodox Clergy in all the corners of the Kingdom. Nay I will venture further and aſſert, Had this been done, the late unparallel'd Prince, if the golden Sands of his life in their natural courſe, would have run ſo long as to this time, as in all probability they would, if conjectures may be made from the ſtrength, and ſoundneſs of all his vital parts, (which was apparent after his cruel Murther) I ſay that he might ſtill have lived happily amongſt us, untouched by the rude hands of violence; and this I think may be made out by ſuch a neceſſary train of conſequences as cannot eaſily be denyed.

But this is not all I have to ſay under this Head; Upon enquiry we ſhall find further miſchiefs enſuing from the poor and contemptible Incomes of men by ſacred Office dedicated to the immediate Worſhip of God.

1. A man is thereby diſpirited. There is, we all know, a certain frame and temper, a certain ſpirit and humour, that is very neceſſary as well as commendable and praiſe worthy for all thoſe ſeveral places and conditions men are fixed in; and for any one to carry himſelf otherways than is becoming his preſent circumſtances, eſpecially ſuch as ſuppoſe him clothed with any Office or ſeparated Function, why, that very thing proves amongſt the greateſt part of Mandkind a leſſening of his perſonal eſteem,

eſteem, and withal a reflection upon and diminution of the very office it ſelf, among thoſe whoſe Judgments are altogether governed by outward repreſentations and reſemblances.

Now this very Humour which is better and more eaſily diſcerned in a man who is perfect Maſter of it, than it is expreſſed by words, is very much loſt, where men are forcibly marryed to narrow Fortunes, where their Incomes are no ways ſuitable to the real as well as apprehended Dignity of thoſe offices they are veſted with; and 'tis impoſſible for a man to lift up his Head with that befitting Majeſty, with that neceſſary and withal humble greatneſs of ſpirit, that hath never a peny in his purſe, as another of a plentiful acceſſion of outward bleſſings can do to very good advantage both to his perſon and his Function.

Alas when a mans ſpirit is gone, beſides the loſs he ſuſtains in himſelf, by neglecting all thoſe Improvements, which further hopes and expectations put him upon, he ſinks into diſeſteem amongſt his Neighbours, and conſequently his perſon is deſpiſed, and his Miniſtery neglected, and people hear him with as little reverence in the Church as they admire him in his forlorn and thredbare habit in the ſtreets.

And

And if the Church ſuffer by her Church officers, as without diſpute by their miſcarriages ſhe does, then I leave the World to judge whether it be policy to let her continue ſtript ſo naked of thoſe neceſſary clothes, which if not adorn her, yet would keep her warm.

2. As this does diſpirit, ſo many times God knowes it does debauch a man, which is a thing of a very pernicious conſequence to our excellent Church, and can only prove her ruine. For as I hinted in the former part of this Diſcourſe, when we have anſwered all our Adverſaries Arguments, drawn from miſinterpreted and abuſed places of Scripture, they preſently fall upon us with this reflection, which though God be thanked is not ſo generally true, as they would make the World believe, yet we muſt not wholly deny it, 'tis too apparent in many publick concourſes, that there are ſome indiſcreet and unwary Clergymen.

And now upon inquiry we ſhall find the mean proviſions of the Clergy have been one great reaſon of their declenſion from the exact and neceſſary Rules of life. For theſe men not having wherewithal to furniſh themſelves with Books to enlarge their thoughts and meditations in order to allure them to ſolitude and retirement, and it may be having a charge, and

not wherewithal to ſatisfie the cravings and neceſſary importunities of their diſtreſſed Families, why they have firſt fled from their diſcontented ſelves, and then it may be into company, to avoid the din and clamour of their Children, and when they are once engaged in evil Company, they are heartily to be pityed, for they are in the High way to ruine, eſpecially when thorough a little uſe, and a few moneths cuſtome their Fancies are taken with it; alas they then like other depraved men, are unſatisfied ſo long as they are at home, and their Studies are the only rooms in the houſe they do not ſee from one week to another: and ſo by degrees after they have worn out all thoſe Characters of Religion which were engraven upon their minds, and waſted the modeſty of their Souls, and forgot the Dignity of their Function, alas they enter into theſe houſes of good Fellowſhip, with as much boldneſs and unconcernedneſs, as the veryeſt plow-jobbers can do, and ſo become fit for nothing but the Churches ſevereſt Cenſures.

But in the mean time does the Church thrive by this? I trow not, no no, ſhe preſently amongſt a great many heedleſs or malicious people, muſt bear the burthen of it all, and the crafty Sectary takes all opportunities to hand this from one place to another, joy-

fully

fully raiſing his own and his parties credit, upon the ruines of other mens reputation; but then

3. If Poverty does neither the one nor the other, yet it commonly diſcontents them, and ſo makes them Firebrands in the Government. For ſuch men as are of tolerable Learning, and reſolved temperance, when they obſerve themſelves neglected, whilſt others, whom they cannot eſteem equal to themſelves, get into fat preferments, why they grow vext and impatient, and ſtraightways their thoughts are fixt upon revenge, and from a quarrel with thoſe who ſit at the Helm, they fall out with the Government it ſelf, and all their parts are bent upon finding out plauſible Arguments and pretences to ſink its reputation amongſt the people, and no ſtone is left unturned to carry on this wicked purpoſe and reſolution.

It is an eaſie matter to make this aſſertion out, from the accounts of every age of Chriſtianity. Hereſies, Schiſms, ſeditions and publick diſturbances, have moſt of them crept in at this back door; and whoſoever will give himſelf the leave to take a juſt account of the Apoſtaſie of many from our Church ſome few years after the Reformation, and ever ſince, he will not be long before he find this its original and ſpring; which thing though not altogether, yet very much had been prevented,

if all the Spiritual allotments for Miniſters had been comfortable, and ſuch as would have afforded wiſe men, (for I undertake not to be an advocate for Fools and Prodigals) a convenient and creditable maintenance.

AND now having ſaid thus much in the vindication of this excellent Church, and withal given the Reaſons of thoſe many diſparagements ſhe hath in theſe late years met withal, I cannot draw off my pen from paper, till by it I have made my humble addreſs to the Nobility and Gentry, and all others who are concerned, by vertue either of their Principles or Eſtates, in the preſervation of the Kingdoms peace, and Nations welfare, and are very unwilling to be ſad ſpectators of thoſe ruines and deſolations, that not many years ago, many of them to their own as well as the Nations ſorrow, were too ſadly acquainted withal; till, I ſay, I have made my humble addreſs to them, and implored them by all that is near and dear to them, to uſe that power God and the King hath entruſted them withal, in ſtifling thoſe Opinions, in ſuppreſſing thoſe dangerous Principles and Maxims, in preventing thoſe practiſes, which have had ſo bad an influence upon the Body Politick, and

and in uſing all methods by which they may be kept from the Common People, whom we find by ſad experience eaſily leavened, and as eaſily afterwards wrought upon, to enter into any Evil action, whereby the peace and happineſs of the Kingdom may be endangered.

And though it may be, this addreſs may be looked upon as the product of a malicions and revengeful ſpirit, yet God that knows the hearts of men, knows it flows from no ſuch bitter Fountain; but ſo far as I am in a capacity to ſerve any of theſe perſons, againſt whom I now complain in their perſonal capacity, no man can I am ſure be more ready and more forward. Let them but live agreeable to the Laws under which they live, and that but as far as their own avowed Principles will give them leave, which I think is a very reaſonable requeſt, and they ſhall not want that juſt eſteem from my ſelf, and ſo I am ſure from all men of my Principles, that they do deſerve. Which if they will not do, but continue reſolute in widening our differences, making our breaches greater, forming men into parties and numbers in oppoſition to the injunction of all thoſe prudent Laws that are enacted by the great Authority of the Nation, and thereby ſtrengthning and encouraging that deplorable Schiſm that is amongſt us, why truly I think he wants

the Spirit and Courage of a Man who holds his tongue, and by his ſilence gives the leaſt ſpirit to ſuch undertakings.

For, alas, what can we imagine all this will centre and bottom in? and who will be the chief gainers by theſe diviſions? That certainly is no hard matter to determine. And truly in my apprehenſion 'tis very ſad, that the revenge of our Nonconforming Brethren ſhould be ſo great againſt the Church of *England*, that rather than ſhe ſhall continue in any glory, and be veſted with any Authority, they will uſe their utmoſt endeavours to pull her down though it be to the deſtruction of the Proteſtant Cauſe, both at home and abroad, and to the Introduction of Popery it ſelf. A good ſign indeed of a Goſpel Spirit, and of that tenderneſs of Conſcience theſe men profeſs upon all occaſions, when preſſed to any neceſſary complyance with the Laws of the Kingdom!

And therefore ſeeing it is ſo, that theſe men will play any game, rather than that in which the ſafety of the Church as well as State is concerned, truly I think all the true Patriots of the Countrey, ought to look upon them accordingly, and give them ſuch fare, (as by thoſe Oaths they takewhen they are admitted to their office,) they are obliged to. And ſeeing they are reſolved we ſhall fall, though they know it muſt needs be accompanied with ſo great a ruine to

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that Cauſe and Intereſt, which was purchaſed with the bloud of the Martyrs, which hath been a Sanctuary to diſtreſſed and baniſhed Foreigners, and which indeed, as it is here maintained by ſo many prudent Laws, is the only ſtay and ſupport of all the Proteſtant Churches abroad; ſeeing, I ſay, they are reſolved to have their wills of this Church, notwithſtanding theſe ſad and too much to be feared effects and conſequences of it, I do declare, I think all true hearted Magiſtrates, in whoſe hands the execution of the Laws does lie, ought to let them know, that they owe more Regard to the preſent Government of the Kingdom; and that if they will continue fixt in their Reſolves to bear down all that ſtands in their way to the undermining the Churches ſafety and reputation, ſo on the other hand they the Magiſtrates are as well reſolved to hinder by all legal and worthy means ſo great and ſo unſeaſonable a violence to thoſe Laws, wherein mens Eſtates and Liberties, mens Religion, and conſequently their Souls are ſo much concerned.

And I am certain nothing is a greater argument among the preſent Magiſtrates, either of Cowardize, or elſe of Ignorance and Non-obſervation, than to ſuffer ſuch aſſaults upon Government, without a ſuitable reſentment of them, and to connive at ſuch practiſes, as are apparently tending to ſhuffle in a Religion once

again amongſt us, by which the Prince loſes half his Government, and the people all their Reaſon and Senſe together.

And therefore, Worthy Sirs, I beg of you to conſider what is incumbent upon you at preſent; do not you let Juſtice ſleep, while covetouſneſs and ambition, while Faction and diſcontent is devouring and eating up all thoſe ſober principles, whereby your Eſtates as well as any thing elſe is ſecured to you and your Poſterity after you. Let not a Church that teaches all her Members to live contentedly in all thoſe ſubordinations the Providence of God hath placed them, and up to all thoſe Duties, which belong to thoſe ſeveral places; I ſay, let not this Church be ſcorned and trampled under feet, by rude and revengeful perſons. And if you think them people of meek and peaceable ſpirits, in whoſe publick Liberty there is no danger, pray enquire after the treatments, thoſe Worthies whoſe Conſciences obliged them to follow the Fortunes of that late incomparable King of bleſſed memory met withal from them, and that will ſave me the labour of giving an account of the temper of a great part of them. 'Tis true, were they all of that nature and diſpoſition, of that Learning and wiſdome, ſome of them are, there might be ſome apology made for them: but alas, the common Followers, I and many of their Teachers too, are violent and headſtrong, quickly

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enflamed and over-heated, and then for want of knowledge and due consideration of things, with great difficulty managed, and kept within any proper and allowed bounds, a thing which some of their very Preachers have complained of to my self and others.

And therefore, why you who are the Instruments of Justice, out of pity to some few, whose parts and piety may possibly recommend them to the esteem and love of all good men, should suffer herds of men, whose zeal outstrips their knowledge, whose Passions surmount their Prudence, whose Religion many times is more the result of the temper of the Body than the rational conviction of the soul; why you, I say, should suffer the Laws to be violated, when no other end can be proposed than shewing a compassion to some few, who deserve a name among the wise and truly learned, I profess I cannot tell: Especially when at the same time the Honour of the Laws, by a neglect of Justice, is exposed to the contempt and scorn of such Numbers, who must (if we would follow those Maxims of Policy, which all wise Governours ever since Communities of men were agreed upon, have observed) who must I say be kept in with bit and bridle.

And having thus addressed my self to the Ministers of Publick Justice, I cannot obtain a Writ of Ease from my self, until I have said some-

ſomething to thoſe very perſons, whoſe deſigns I have in the foregoing Treatiſe expoſed, and whoſe Methods of ruine to the Church and Kingdom I have diſcovered. And here I am not afraid to tell them, that many of them are my Acquaintance, in whoſe civil converſation I have and do take pleaſure, and to whom upon ſome ſcores I have ſtood engaged; the piety and ſtrictneſs of many of their Lives I admire and love; theſe with ſome other things would reconcile me to them, did not my zeal for the Nations happineſs, my duty to a Church, by whom I and all the World may be ſufficiently inſtructed in all things neceſſary to be believed and practiſed: Further, did not my Fears (and God knows thoſe too well grounded) of the return of a Religion amongſt us (and that cauſed chiefly by theſe mens ſtubbornneſs) the agreement with which muſt at the ſame time, be to fall out with all thoſe Faculties, whereby we are in capacities to diſcern things that differ; Did not theſe things with many others thus diſpoſe of and command me, I ſay I could wiſh theſe men all the happineſs in this World, that upon good Grounds they could deſire.

And therefore pray Sirs, let me entreat you to conſider what you are a doing whilſt ſo reſolvedly you continue to ſeparate from our Church; why truly, pardon me if I err, I think

think I do not, I cannot ſay you are doing the buſineſs of Religion, for that I am ſure may be as well, nay all things conſidered, better done by thoſe under the Diſcipline and Government of our Church, as I have ſhewed in the beginning of this Treatiſe. In which I am the more ſatisfyed from the obſervations I have made of many of your admired Followers, whoſe Lives as far as I can diſcern are ſpent moſt upon pitying Publick Magiſtrates and Miniſters, and ſhaking their heads at the times, with many other popular and uſual artifices of miſrepreſenting things or perſons not juſt according to their Minds.

Again, I cannot ſay you are doing the Buſineſs of your Governours, ſetling the People in the notions of obedience and ſubmiſſion, begetting in them venerable thoughts of thoſe who are Gods Truſtees on Earth; no, for we find, no ſooner do men wheel off from our Church, and liſt themſelves under your Banners, but preſently they grow jealous of the Powers of the Nation, and are always furniſhed with idle tales and groundleſs whiſpers, to leſſen their Reputation among the Common People.

Nay further I cannot ſay, you are doing your own buſineſs, for alas throw us but once down, and you know by old experience, that you are all together by the ears, and ſcarce ten of you

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can agree together, upon any thing that may be the Foundation of a future ſettlement, but all are ſtriving to be the Greateſt, and every man hath ſuch a fond opinion of his own way, as to think, nay to proclaim it, deſerving to be the Nations Standard, yea and to pronounce bitter Curſes againſt all thoſe who will not concur in Judgment with him.

And truly for the ſatisfaction of a great many well meaning perſons, who at preſent are impoſed upon, I could wiſh, were it but lawful to permit it, and conſiſtent with the Kingdoms and Churches ſafety, that the Ball might lie at your feet for a few days; methinks I ſee what animoſities and heats, what ſtrifes and contentions would preſently be in the midſt of you, and how quickly all you, who now combine together againſt our poor deſpiſed Church, would fall into a thouſand parties, and what variety of Churches we preſently ſhould have formed, and the beſt of it is, every one of them vogued to be according to the pattern in the Mount.

And therefore Brethren, for Gods ſake recollect your ſelves and do not ſacrifice the Proteſtant Religion to your own luſts and paſſions, comply with the Laws in imitation of the old Puritans, as far as you can, and then I do not doubt, but our Governours will find out ſome way or other, to let you underſtand

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their Reſentments of your orderly compliance; and certainly 'tis better to build our hopes of future kindneſs from our Prince upon publick manifeſtations of peaceableneſs ofSpirit, than upon threats and menaces, than upon bold and daring actions, whereby we intimate unto him that if he will not give us according to our Wills and Pleaſure, we will ſnatch it from him, and that by force too, whether he will or no.

One word more and I have done; I beſeech you do not ſay that this intimation of Popery in and through your diſobedience to the Churches Laws is a popular plea, invented on purpoſe to make you odious among the People. I profeſs as it is mentioned here by me, 'tis no ſuch thing; but the reſult of a full ſatisfaction I have, that nothing can make way for that Religion, but the ruine of the Church of *England.* And truly I am ſo far from rendring you odious, that if you could agree among your ſelves, upon any thing conſiſtent with the Churches Peace and Safety, I would give my Prayers and all honeſt endeavours whatſoever to contribute towards your contentment. But till then pray give us leave to ſecure our ſelves from ſuch deſolations (as will end in your deſtruction as well as ours) by all agreeable ways and means whatſoever.

And now after all this, if you will ſuffer your ſelves

ſelves to be ſo provoked, as one while to pity me and then again revile me, I have no more to ſay, but that I am fully ſatisfied in my own Conſcience in what I have done; and that for a requital, I am reſolved to make you the objects of my hearty pity, and the ſubjects of my Prayers, but not mine anger and revenge, for that is not to follow our Maſters command, *To love our enemies, to bleſs them that curſe, to to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them which deſpitefully uſe us, and* perſecute *us*, which may be done with Tongues as well as Hands: which good and excellent advice I am reſolved through the aſſiſtance of Gods Gracious Spirit to purſue and follow; and therefore let thoſe againſt whom this little Treatiſe is chiefly levelled, deal with my perſon or good name as they pleaſe, I am prepared for it.

THE END.

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